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## FILM PREVIEW: MEL BROOKS' "SPACEBALLS"

# Rod Serling's

August 1987

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Rod Serling's  
**THE TWILIGHT ZONE**  
 August 1987  
 K 48386  
 Magazine

# ROBERT R. McCAMMON

**AN EXCERPT FROM  
HIS NEW NOVEL  
"SWAN SONG"**

## "THE OTHERS" A NEW TALE BY

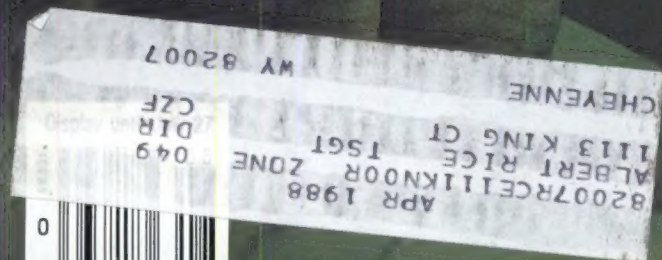
# JOYCE CAROL OATES

# THE ART OF JEFFREY JONES

## FICTION BY

**DAVID J. SCHOW**  
**CRAIG KEE STRETE**  
**THOMAS E. SANDERS**  
**CAROL EMSHWILLER**  
**MICHAEL SEIDMAN**

**SPECIAL FEATURE:**  
**AMERICAN INDIAN**  
**MAGIC**





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# IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE

The Faraway Nearby.



Robert R. McCammon



Joyce Carol Oates

When literary historians look back on the last two decades, they are likely to remember this time as an extraordinary flowering of what might be called *contemporary fantasy*. It's distinguished from heroic or "High" fantasy by its setting—the here-and-now—and its use of familiar, universal forms of supernatural or magical power. Much of it, most obviously the novels of Stephen King, has been published as horror, and, to be sure, many of the supernatural elements in these works are destructive, if not downright evil.

But not all of them. Several of the most influential fantasy novels of recent years, including *The Stand*, *The Talisman*, and *The Eyes of the Dragon*, as well as such novels as John Crowley's *Little, Big*, Mark Helprin's *A Winter's Tale*, and D.M. Thomas's *The White Hotel*, are all works in which the forces of evil are matched, as they are in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, by equally powerful forces for good.

Which brings us to Robert R. McCammon. We're pleased to be publishing this month an exclusive excerpt from his new novel *Swan Song*, to be published this month by Pocket Books. As you might expect from the author of *Mystery Walk* and *Usher's Passing*, and the tale that became the *Twilight Zone* teleplay "Nightcrawlers," it's a cracking good horror novel. But it's also an epic fantasy of the confrontation between the powers of darkness and light. For our excerpt, we've chosen a chilling episode titled "Lights Out," that stands by itself as a glimpse

at the most plausible horror of our time, the aftermath of nuclear war. But that's only the beginning of a compelling novel that's certain to be one of the most talked-about books of the year, if not the decade. We urge you to go out and read it.

McCammon, whose recent accomplishments include helping to found the Horror Writers of America, last appeared here with "Yellowjacket Summer" (October 1986) which was one of last year's most popular stories. He's currently at work on another novel which Pocket will publish in the summer of 1988.

Another practitioner of contemporary fantasy at the highest level is Joyce Carol Oates who contributes a new story, "The Others" to this issue. It's been said that Oates possesses enough talent for at least a half dozen literary careers. She could stake a claim to being one of the our best writers of horror and supernatural fiction on the strength of her two novels, *Bellefleur* and *A Bloodsmoor Romance*, and her expertly chilling short stories. (One of them, "The Rose Wall," appeared in the very first issue of TZ.) But those are only a few of her accomplishments. She has written prize-winning poetry, essays, and criticism. Her mainstream novel *Solstice* was a national bestseller. She holds an endowed chair in creative writing at Princeton University. And this summer, her nonfiction work *On Boxing* (Doubleday) has won rave reviews as the first fresh look at the subject in a long, long time. Her newest novel, *You*

*Must Remember This*, will be published by Dutton later this summer.

A third excellent example of the form is "Pamela's Get," a new novelette by David J. Schow, who last appeared here with "Red Light" (December '86), which was chosen for *Year's Best Horror #15* (DAW). Along with "Brass," in our sister publication *Night Cry* (Spring/Summer '85), the story completes a trilogy of haunting tales about women who lose touch with their identities. Schow has just completed a new psychological horror novel, *The Kill Riff*, which will be published in hardcover by Tor Books later this year.

## The Sky is a Circle

This issue we also continue our exploration into alternate views of reality with a special section on American Indian magic. It begins with "The Sky is a Circle," an introduction to the Native American spirit world by journalist Ariel Remler who also provides glimpses of some of the writers who are beginning to incorporate those beliefs into their fiction.

Five such writers are represented in this issue. Two, Craig Kee Strete and Thomas E. Sanders (Nipawano), are American Indians. Strete, a novelist, poet and screenwriter who has been nominated for an Oscar, an Emmy, an Edgar, a Hugo, and a Nebula, has published several novels, including *Burn Down the Night*, *Paint Your Face on a Drowning in the River*, and *When Grandfather Journeys into Winter*. A new novel, *To*





David J. Schow



Carol Emshwiller



Michael Seidman

*Make Death Love Us*, will be published by Doubleday this summer.

Tom Sanders is a professor of literature at the University of South Florida who has written several books on writing, including *Literature of the American Indian*, co-authored with his brother Walter Peek (Metacomet). He has published several stories in *Night Cry* and also in a number of literary magazines. His novelette, "The Bridge," included in this issue, is reprinted from *The South Dakota Review*.

Michael Seidman, author of the haunting novelette "The Dream that Follows Darkness," is the Executive Editor of Tor Books, and the editor of the Edgar-winning magazine *The Armchair Detective*. His short stories have appeared in *Mystery* magazine, and his articles about writing have been published in *The Writer*, *Writer's Digest*, and *Mystery Scene*, for which his is a contributing editor.

Like Oates, Sanders, and Seidman, Carol Emshwiller also teaches writing. She has been an instructor at the Clarion science fiction writing workshops, and currently teaches at New York University. A contributor to Harlan Ellison's *Dangerous Visions* anthologies, Emshwiller is equally at home in genre and literary magazines, having recently published stories in publications as varied as *Omni* and *TriQuarterly*. Her story, "Vilcabamba," looks at the other American Indians, the native peoples of South America.

Finally, this issue includes eight poems by Jack Dann from a work-in-progress titled *Songs from a White*



Thomas E. Sanders (Nippawanok)

*Heart*, which chronicles his initiation into some of the mysteries of Native American spirituality. Dann, who appeared here most recently with "Bringing it Home" (February 1986), co-authored with Barry Malzberg, is the co-editor, with his wife Jeanne Van Buren Dann, of *In the Field of Fire*, an anthology of Vietnam war fiction.

#### Moving Pictures

We've also provided much to delight the eye as well as the mind, including a portfolio of the work of artist Jeffrey Jones and a preview of Mel Brooks's new sf comedy *Spaceballs*. We hope you enjoy it.

One final note—we've just received word on the winners of this year's Writers Guild Awards, presented in Hollywood. In the category "Best Anthology Episode/Single Program" the nominees were Alan Brennert for "Her Pilgrim Soul" (TZ, February 1987), Harlan Ellison for "Paladin of the Lost Hour" (TZ December 1985), George R.R. Martin for his adaptation of Roger Zelazny's "The Last Defender of Camelot," and Richard Matheson for "The Doll" (TZ, June 1982). The first three were all teleplays for the new CBS-TV *Twilight Zone* program. The fourth was a script commissioned for the original *Twilight Zone* program, which finally aired on NBC's *Amazing Stories*. The winner was Harlan Ellison.

It seems that the spirit of contemporary fantasy is alive and well in other media as well.

—TK

## THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

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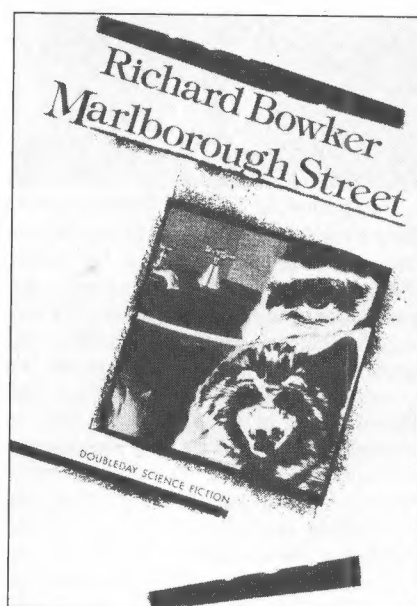
# BOOKS

by Edward Bryant

*Marlborough Street* by Richard Bowker  
*Hearts of Wood* by William Kotzwinkle  
*The Magic Wagon* by Joe R. Landsdale  
*Dodo* by Tony Weeks-Pearson  
*Cahena* by Manly Wade Wellman  
*Feral Cell* by Richard Bowes  
*The Cleanup* by John Skipp and Craig Spector  
*Nightshow* by Richard Layman  
*Tread Softly* by Richard Layman  
*The Fifth Omni Book of Science Fiction* edited by Ellen Datlow  
*Neanderthals* edited by Robert Silverberg, Martin H. Greenberg, and Charles G. Waugh  
*Battlehymn* by Jack McKinney  
*The Female Man* by Joanna Russ

It is such a pleasure to pick up a book by an author one hasn't read before, to start reading the first chapter, and then to realize that one doesn't want to put the book down. The experience happens all too rarely. For me, it happened—this month with Richard Bowker and *Marlborough Street* (Doubleday, 182 pp., \$12.95, ISBN 0-385-19753-5). This isn't Bowker's first book—he's had two others out: *Forbidden Sanctuary* from Del Rey and *Replica* from Bantam. But it's the first I've read. Now I've obtained both the earlier novels and I'm hoping they will furnish equal rewards.

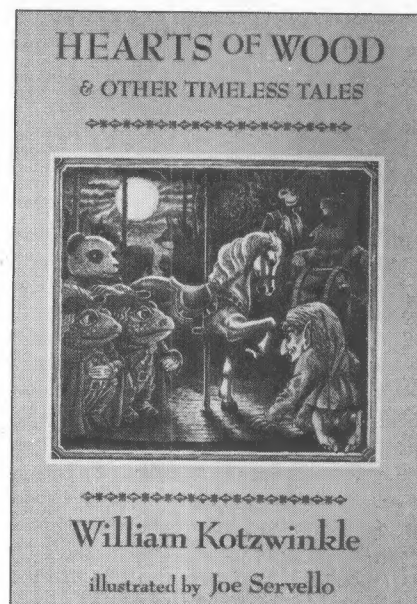
*Marlborough Street* is a solid contemporary novel that, given the right script and director, could end up as a terrific low-budget film. It's about a young man with psychic powers who's not doing terribly much with his life, in spite of his supernatural abilities. Sometimes he helps a buddy on the Boston police force find lost, strayed, or stolen children. But mainly, Alan Simpson earns his way as a sort of literary secretary for an eccentric and



rich amateur philosopher.

Then Alan runs into the terrified and terrorized Julie, a young woman being manipulated in an abhorrent Mansonian manner by a powerful psychic named Stone. Stone's way 'round the bend. He's plotting out a scheme that involves kidnapping the children of prominent public officials and sacrificing them. Not a nice man at all.

Both Alan and Julie are reasonably normal sorts—that is to say, he's a wimp, content to drift along without implementing any life-project that's at all ambitious; and she's a dupe, easily manipulated by the Svengali-like Stone. As with any decent novel, *Marlborough Street* gives the characters some room to grow, to develop. They do, in a suspenseful and likable fashion. Thus author Bowker uses the limited space available in the standard Doubleday format to give his characters some real breathing room in which to come to life. That also goes



for such supporting roles as Alan's dotty mother, another psychic; and the police detective, Kelliher. Bowker obviously feels warmly about his characters. He clearly doesn't consider them cardboard cutouts with labels pasted on their foreheads.

As a reader, I was also pleased with the sense of place exhibited. While reading *Marlborough Street*, I felt just as mentally located in Boston as I ever do reading, say, Robert Parker's mysteries. So yes, I am impressed. Bowker's clearly a fantasist to keep watching. And who else would set up a good/evil dichotomy defined as the to-the-death conflict of a Red Sox fan (Alan) vs. a New York Yankee buff (Stone)?

You may end up having to abandon the adult shelves and wander over to the children's department of your local booklegger. The trek will be worth it if you can find William Kotzwinkle's new collection, *Hearts of*

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# BOOKS

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**Wood** (Godine, 85 pp., \$12.95, ISBN 0-87923-648-5). The jacket says that this book "is a collection of new fairy tales for children, stories that reach into the heart of children's wonder and questions about the world around them." That's true so far as it goes. But don't be misled into thinking this is a collection for children only. The author is one of that impressive group of contemporary fantasists who understands the ageless and timeless nature of the fairy tale. Jane Yolen, Angela Carter, Connie Willis, Tanith Lee. And William Kotzwinkle.

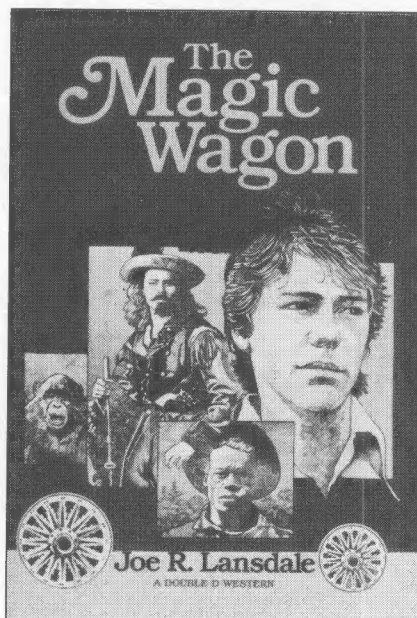
*Hearts of Wood* contains five tales, the most resonant of which are the title story, an account of what happens when the aspirations of a group of wooden carousel creatures are given a boost by a tunnel troll; "The Dream of Chuang," a retelling and terrific new interpretation of the legend of the philosopher Chuang Tzu; and "The Enchanted Horses," concerning the final project of an aged painter. Lagniappe is the fine pen-and-ink artwork by Joe Servello.

The stories in *Hearts of Wood* don't have the sharp edges and dark dimensions so often characteristic of traditional fairy tales. Instead the author gives them the crafted, polished, and smoothly worn curves and surfaces of finely fashioned wood, much like one would expect to feel when touching the dragon and panda and frogs riding the carousel in the title story. Smooth, cool, sensual.

Here's another novel that amply repays a little legwork in ferreting out its presence in a bookstore. Check the Western section for *The Magic Wagon* by Joe R. Lansdale (182 pp., \$12.95, ISBN 0-385-23269-1). It's a Double D Western, Doubledays' house brand of that genre, a line that's even harder to locate in a general bookstore than the sf titles. If need be, try a special order. Your odds'll be at least fifty-fifty. But it's worth the effort.

*The Magic Wagon* is set in 1909 right at the end of one of America's most fascinating eras, the death of the Old West. In a sort of inversion the *Wizard of Oz*, young Buster Fogg is wandering afoot and directionless after his family and farm have been blown away by a tornado. He en-

counters and eventually tags along with Billy Bob Daniels, trick shot and consummate medicine showman (he also purports to be the illegitimate son of Wild Bill Hickock); Old Albert, the wise and somewhat enigmatic black man who drives the Magic Wagon; and Rot Toe, the wrestling Chimpanzee. The bizarre company of the Magic Wagon has to keep perpetually moving after an episode in the Black Hills when Billy Bob ill-advisedly purchased 1) wood to fix the sideboards hewn from sacred trees in the Dakotas, and 2) a mummy which may or may not be the body of Wild Bill himself. Because of 1) or 2)—or maybe both at



once—a massive storm is following the Magic Wagon, rather like the cloud hovering over Joe Butts in *Lil Abner*.

Everything comes to a head in Mud Creek, Texas, when Billy Bob has to confront his supernatural fate and Buster has to grow up real fast. The climax is, well, suitably electric. It reminds me of the kind of freewheeling folk-telling usually exhibited by Lansdale's fellow Texan, Howard Waldrop. Or sometimes by the flatlander, T. Coraghessan Boyle. Not an inconsiderable accomplishment.

Speaking of Howard Waldrop, rumor has it that a new collection of his short stories, including some never before published, will be printed sometime in the next few months by a small press ramrodded by Arnie Fenner, former publisher of the magazine, *Shayol*.

Also speaking of Waldrop, I was reminded of him and his well-known dodo story, "The Ugly Chickens," when I happened upon a new novel called

*Dodo* by Tony Weeks-Pearson (Viking/Salamander, 158 pp., \$14.95 ISBN 0-948681-00-4). *Dodo*, like "The Ugly Chickens," takes as its thesis that the unlucky dodo species survived in some remote spot longer than science gives credit for.

Weeks-Pearson gives us an unnamed island, the sort of darkly dismal place depicted so vividly in last year's Michael Caine film, *Water*. Colonialism is staggering, the French have lost control of the island, the black slaves are freed and replaced by cheap Indian labor. The terms change, but the oppression remains as crushing.

To the island finally comes Mr. Fitch, a schoolteacher. He obsessively searches for the dodo, particularly after the swamp called the Sea of Dreams is drained and relatively recent dodo bones are discovered. The dodo becomes symbolic for the various factions on the island. A plague threatens to annihilate the human population. Bird-cults arise. The image of the dodo permeates every social structure.

And the final live dodos come to horrific ends.

Weeks-Pearson's novel is a game try. I won't say that it's as ungainly as a dumpy, flightless bird. But finally it flounders under a weight of pretension. I hate to sound provincial, but the author could profit from studying Howard Waldrop's deftness of hand at treating the same subject and theme. Or maybe Waldrop himself should have tackled this novel of the final dodo.

No writer wants to die, but that, of course, doesn't mean spit after sufficient years have elapsed and one either encounters the out-of-control bus of blind fate, or else reaches the genetically set deadline. Then all we can hope for is that we go out on a grace note.

That happened last year with Theodore Sturgeon's *Godbody*. This year it's the case with Manly Wade Wellman's *Cahena* (Doubleday, 182 pp., \$12.95, ISBN 0-385-19824-8). I suppose *Cahena* is only a border-line fantasy. It's primarily an historical novel about the eighth-century Moorish leader, the Cahena, and of Wulf, the Saxon warrior who rode beside her. Doesn't matter. The novel is set in a fairly hazy historical period. For all most readers know of the time, it might as well be placed on Barsoom.

This is the tale of the Cahena's final battles with the Moslem invaders. It is an exciting, detailed, and altogether admirable novel told in cleanly

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# BOOKS

(continued from page 10)

elegant prose. It should be required reading, in fact, for all modern fantasy novelists—to show them it's possible to invent fantastic worlds far removed from the here and now, in which the language is lucid and conversational, evoking those distant settings without ever having to fall back of stiff archaisms.

Manly Wade Wellman died in 1986 after six decades of respectable and respected achievement in fantasy, science fiction, horror, historical, general, and a variety of other sorts of writing. I don't know if other manuscripts of his lurk waiting for publication. But if not, *Cahena*, all the way through its final, killer line, will serve as a fine and fitting memorial.

If there's any consolation to observing the all-too-large numbers of writers in the field who are dying, it may be the note that generations of interesting new writers are increasingly jamming in. A surprising number of them are publishing with Warner's Questar line. In some respects, a healthy chunk of the Questar series could be considered as starting to compete favorably with Terry Carr's New Ace SF Specials. Questar hasn't been trumpeting that, but it's true.

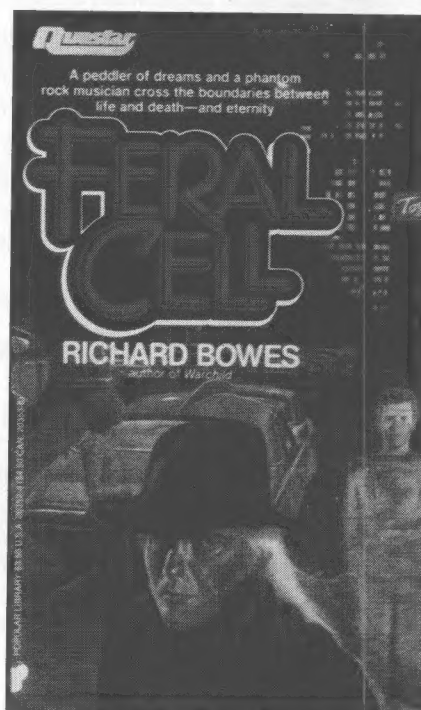
This leads to mentioning Richard Bowes's second novel, *Feral Cell* (224 pp., \$3.50, ISBN 0-445-20-352-8). The book is one of those kitchen sink projects in which an awful lot is going on, maybe too much. The time is the late 1990s; the place, New York City. The future is getting pretty strange, but is still recognizably connected with our present.

Game master Robert Leal's job is to set up role-playing scenarios for folks with too much money, spare time, and boredom. He tries to avoid the admission, but he's also dying of cancer. Then he discovers that cancer can help translate him from this Earthly dimension (Cancer) to Capricorn, an alternate plane of reality just next door. He also learns that the passage is two-way—and there are less than pleasant types from Capricorn who are mucking around here on Earth. Leal starts getting some clues that his rock musician buddy Kane, who apparently died back in the sixties, is still alive—in Capricorn. And this has something

to do with the rock group Feral Cell. Even as the feral cells in Leal's own body are eating away his life.

The dual realities of *Feral Cell* remind me a bit of *The Talisman*, even more of Lucius Shepard's *Green Eyes*. Author Bowes plays around with both mysticism and science, a difficult juggling feat. The book possesses the kind of density of detail, thorough belief in paranoia, and breakneck velocity that earmark cyberpunk, though there's hardly a computer to be found.

I couldn't call *Feral Cell* completely successful. But it does hit on enough cylinders to make it well worth the attention of the reader will-



ing to tackle something adventurous and more than a little quirky. I'm just not sure that everything in the novel makes sense. But then maybe it isn't supposed to. Or maybe—perish the thought—I'm just getting old. Naw.

No sooner did Dennis Etchison disparagingly refer to the "loud" horror revolution (Clive Barker, S.P. Somtow's *Vampire Junction*, Song of Kali by Dan Simmons, et cetera) as "splatterpunk," when those selfsame authors gleefully pounced upon the term. In the words of the dear, departed sixties, they co-opted it. Now there are even, God save us, splatterpunk t-shirts. I know. I was about number fifteen in the line to buy one.

A couple of the most unlikely splatterpunks in person are John Skipp and Craig Spector, the authors of *The Light at the End* and the novelization of *Fright Night*. Skipp and Spector

seem disgustingly wholesome. They look like the world's most innocent young writers. They tend to bounce around at social events like cheerful puppies. Then they go home and write about *ghastly* things.

Their new collaborative novel is *The Cleanup* (Bantam, 379 pp., \$3.95, ISBN 0-553-26056-1). Skipp and Spector's last book was a crackling narrative of a punk vampire in the eighties, with-it Manhattan. *The Cleanup* is a morality play about a young loser named Billy Rowe, who one day gets a talking to by an "angel" and thereafter is gifted with the power to Get Even. Effectively invulnerable, he becomes the self-appointed avenger of urban injustice. It's like *Deathwish* redoubled in spades. The only problem with absolute power is that it... We all know, don't we?

I really wanted to like *The Cleanup* more than I did. What finally diminished the intended effect for me was, I'm afraid, the sheer bulk. The points the authors have to make are valid enough, if you can find them in the prose, but it's like the line in *Amadeus*. Too many notes, guys. Too many notes.

There was a time about a decade ago when I thought that Richard Laymon was one of the most disgusting horror writers I'd ever read. Now bear in mind, it takes considerable achievement in prose to make me queasy. But Laymon could do it with novels such as *The Cellar* and *The Woods Are Dark*. At the time, it seemed to me the author's tone, that most ephemeral of analyzed literary qualities, was the problem. I felt that Laymon, as a writer, took entirely too much pleasure in depicting the abuse, the abasement, the brutalizing of his characters. There was something askew there, even for me.

Years have passed. Maybe I've mellowed. Perhaps Richard Laymon has. I've just read two of his recent novels and I no longer feel obliged to brush my teeth afterward. *Nightshow* (Tor, 283 pp., \$3.50, ISBN 0-812-52106-4) comes very close to wiping my old memories. In a strange way, it seems to me an outline for a sort of Stephen King book. There is a new young couple, both of whom are involved in movie special effects, and both of whom are likeable enough. There is a horror-nerd teenager named Tony, a would-be special effects artist who has a pretty terrible time relating to other human beings, especially girls. He comes to Hollywood hoping to achieve his dream—and picks Dani,



the effects expert, to be his mentor. She is not thrilled at the prospect. Then there is Linda, the one-time victim of a cruel practical joke by Tony and two now-dead boys. She's a psycho, with some reason for being such. She's hot after a final vengeance.

It's a good cast and a workable plot. Unlike my memories of those early Laymon novels, the author makes his characters, if not always likable, at least understandable. One can empathize with their problems, especially poor Tony's. Tony is a kid who wouldn't be out of place at most science fiction conventions. He's the sort who sincerely sends in personal ads to *Fangoria*. And he's not entirely stable.

I think the area where the book falters is its air of perfunctory writing. Usually I feel most published novels could benefit from being cut. Maybe *Nightshow* needs to be somewhat longer. I kept feeling that once having established the general parameters for his characters, the author then let them go through their motions mechanically, without exploring much deeper. The Stephen King approach to this would have necessitated more words, true, but it would also have given the players increased flesh. It would have been so much easier to care about them, or about what happened to them.

Then there is *Tread Softly* (Tor, 311 pp., 395 pp., ISBN 0-812-52108-0). This is a peculiar case, with one of the great plot switches about three fifths of the way through. In film terms, it would translate as starting with the same sort of horrific real-life premise as *The Hills Have Eyes* or the original *Friday the 13th*, and ending up with the splashy horror-fantasy of any George Romero zombie movie. Sound good so far?

The novel starts out with about eleven adults and kids (It takes a hundred pages or so to get the cast of characters straight) heading off for a nice camping vacation in the mountains. Little do they realize they're going to run into a witch and her brutish, homicidal son. Our heroes get into a life-and-death struggle with the witch and her boy. Once evil Junior gets lunched, the witch, naturally pissed off, proceeds to throw a curse on the tourist families. Back in L.A., they find out the curse is for real. Thus starts the supernatural phase of the story. The author gets points for ambition.

But again, there're problems with sloppy writing and stereotypes, die-cut

sex scenes and strained plotting. One gets the feeling Richard Laymon writes very fast. Writers usually have sound economic reasons for doing that. And should novelists invest heart and soul into projects clearly intended as commercial enterprises?

Yes. At least within the bounds of avoiding starvation and eviction.

I'll keep reading Richard Laymon novels as they come out. I realize I'm grouching about his books (though not as much as a few years ago). But what kept me going when I was tempted to

set either *Nightshow* or *Tread Softly* down were those occasional adroit moments when the author proved he knew very well how to tell an engrossing story and breathe life into believable characters.

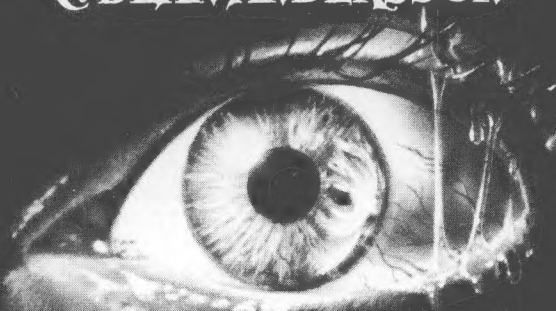
The very worst thing about *The Fifth Omni Book of Science Fiction* edited by Ellen Datlow (Zebra, 381 pp., \$3.95, ISBN 0-8217-2050-3) is that the contents page hold no page numbers. Perhaps this represents a cyberpunk approach to new-wave indexing.

(continued on page 88)

# At the end of life there is only...


## TORTURE TOMB

### C. DEAN ANDERSSON



**G**ina knew her sister was dead. But the agonized screams and vivid images in her nightmares made mockery of the fact. Now Gina must assemble dark forces of her own to enter the realm of the dead and wage fierce battle with the forces of evil...or doom herself and her sister to endless torment...and the world to final annihilation.

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# ON FILM

By James Verniere

*A preview of Mel Brooks's satiric sf saga Spaceballs.*



**OFF TO SEE THE COSMOS:** Lone Starr leads the Spaceballs gang.

*Satire's my weapon, but I'm too discreet*

*To run amuck, and tilt at all I meet.*  
—Alexander Pope

*Satire is a sort of glass, wherein  
beholders do generally discover  
everybody's face but their own.*  
—Jonathan Swift

*Satire is what closes on Saturday night.*  
—George S. Kaufman

Satire may be a lot of things to a lot of people. But to filmmaker Mel Brooks, it's the only thing, which is to say that satire—or at least that form of satire commonly called parody—is Brooks's forte. It's also apparently his biological imperative. "I

was born short," said Brooks, explaining his penchant for satire in a recent telephone interview. Apparently he developed a taste for cutting figureheads down to size while growing up in New York City.

"My modus operandi was always to bring down the Goliaths of the world. And with good parody, you really only have to move an inch or two away from the truth to do it," he explained. "At the same time, it's a celebration of the joy of being alive."

Brooks first performed his particular form of comic surgery in *Blazing Saddles* (1974), a ridiculous imitation of an American Western that successfully debunked the genre's most revered—uh—sacred cows. Westerns had been popular for decades, and the

cowboys played by actors like Gary Cooper and Randolph Scott were bona fide American heroes. But the cowboys in *Blazing Saddles* were "flatulent drunks, idiots, and perverts, and the town sheriff was—gulp—a black man.

Perhaps emboldened by the popular and critical response to his first full-scale travesty, Brooks used other genres as comic butts. *Young Frankenstein* (1974), his take-off on the classic James Whale horror films, was such an uproarious burlesque that some of us were never able to look at the original films in quite the same way. Even *High Anxiety* (1977), Brooks's uneven send-up of Alfred Hitchcock, had its moments of hilarity, including a few examples of postmodern lunacy. (Remember the camera crashing through the french windows? Or the newsprint swirling down the bathtub drain?)

Clearly, it was only a question of time before Brooks went from whipping "horse operas" to junking "space operas." What territory could be more ripe for rapine than the George Lucasland of virginal princesses, hissable villains, and white-clad skywalkers? The subject is so perfect one is reminded of a remark someone once made about television: "You can't satirize something that's a parody to begin with."

The point is that some subjects lend themselves more readily to a boot in the behind than others, and in the wake of the blockbuster success of films like the *Star Wars* series, *Aliens*, and *Star Trek IV*, science fiction films are clearly poised for a fifty-yard punt. This might give pause to some satirists (even Alexander Pope warned against "breaking a butterfly upon a wheel"), but no one has ever accused Mel Brooks of subtlety (hum, for example, if you will, a few bars from "Springtime for Hitler"). Clearly, nothing is



safe from the Brooks Reign of Terror, and *Spaceballs*, his assault on extraterrestrial epics, is slated for release this summer from MGM Pictures.

The \$22.7 million comedy, which is set in part on the mythical Planet Spaceball, will feature Brooks himself—not only as director, producer, and co-writer—but also in a dual role. He plays President Scoob (an anagram for Brooks?), ruler of Spaceball (whose motto is *Scroob the People*), as well as Yogurt, an ancient two-football wise-man who “dispenses wisdom with fruit at the bottom.”

“Yogurt is just the two-thousand year-old man painted gold and dwarfed,” explained Brooks. “I wear these little shoes sticking out of my knees, and I make these theological/philosophical statements that don’t mean a (expletive) thing. I just waste everybody’s time.”

Bill Pullman, who earned rave reviews recently as Anita Morris’s incredibly stupid boyfriend in *Ruthless People*, will play Lone Starr, “a space bum who pilots an interstellar Winnebago.” Daphne Zuniga is “Her Spoiled Highness” Princess Vespa of Druidia (which makes her a Druish Princess). And Rick Moranis, currently starring as Seymore in *Little Shop of Horrors*, is featured as the villainous Dark Helmet.

But what would a science fiction parody be without non-human characters? *Spaceballs* will also feature John Candy as Lone Starr’s faithful sidekick, Barf, a half-man, half-dog “Mawg.” Mime Lorene Yarnell will appear as a golden android named Dot Matrix (voice supplied by Joan Rivers). And Richard Karron plays the notorious inter-galactic gangster, Pizza the Hut. Rounding out this cast of outrageous characters are King Roland (Dick Van Patten) Prince Valium (Jm J. Bullock) and Dark Helmet’s minion, Colonel Sandurz (George Wyner).

Thomas Meehan (*To Be or Not To Be*), who co-wrote the film’s script with Brooks and Ronny Graham, explained the genesis of *Spaceballs*. After completing *To Be or Not To Be*, he, Brooks, and Graham were having lunch in the executive dining room at Twentieth Century-Fox, when Marvin Davis, the former owner of Fox, shouted—“what’s next?”—from across the room.

“Mel just yelled back: ‘Planet Moron!’” said Meehan, who had no idea what Brooks was talking about. They had originally planned to make *Scared to Death*, a comedy set in a haunted house in the Louisiana bayou.



VINTAGE BROOKS: Gene Wilder raises the dead in *Young Frankenstein*.

“But then we started talking about the *Star Wars* movies. They’re wonderful pictures, but they’re also somehow pompous and overblown.” The title change came after the recent release of a British film called *Morons From Outer Space*, and so *Spaceballs* was born.

Meehan, who wrote the libretto for the musical version of *Annie* and had previously published numerous short stories in *The New Yorker*, is not especially concerned about offending the purists. “You haven’t done it right if no one gets offended,” he suggested. “But the film is done with respect and admiration.” Nor is he concerned about the cult status of previous science fic-

tion parodies like *Hardware Wars* and *Flesh Gordon*. “A parody of *Star Wars* movies should really look as good as the originals,” he said. “I think *Young Frankenstein* is Mel’s best picture, in part because it looks as good as the old James Whale movies.”

“I think the genre has been beautifully executed by directors like George Lucas and Ridley Scott,” added co-producer, Ezra Swerdlow. “It wouldn’t be worthy of parody if it didn’t produce great films.”

How does Brooks choose a subject for comic dissection? “There are no forbidden topics. But I do look for something that has a wide frame of reference,” he explained. “For instance,



FINDING CULTURE: Our *Spaceballs* heroes at the Temple of Yogurt.





**HER SPOILED HIGHNESS:** Princess Vespa pulls her own weight.

if I did a sports film, I wouldn't do hockey. I'd do football. One of the reasons *To Be or Not To Be* didn't do very well in America, even though it's a good movie, is that not enough people knew about the theater and World War II. So the frames of reference are very important.

"There's also very little left to 'parodize,'" said Brooks. "And it was 'paradise,' if you will, to do space. You

go to a space film, and you sit in a seat that's shaking and the sound is travelling all around you in the theater. It makes Jews crazy. It's easy and fun stuff to have fun with." But despite Brooks's levity, the script of *Spaceballs* took two years to develop. "It was the last great genre to parody and also the last peak to achieve," he solemnly intoned, adding that it was a tough assault, because there was no

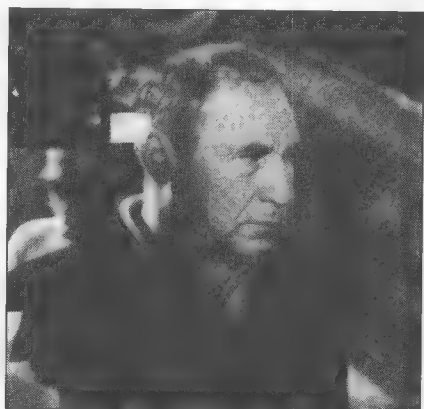
oxygen after thirteen thousand feet.

He went on to explain that *Spaceballs* will be shown in seventy millimeter. "If you're going to satirize science fiction, you have to do it in the appropriate style. It has to be a big picture. Without bragging, I think that some of our special effects are better than those in the serious films. On *Young Frankenstein* we backlit everything and worked like dogs to get the look of those old James Whale films. You just can't skimp on comedy."

Perhaps coincidentally, theorists have argued that satire was originally a kind of literary voodoo, designed to kill its victims, and that parody was originally intended to destroy the subject being parodied. Will *Spaceballs* be the ruination of *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, and their ilk? Probably not. But many of us owe Mel Brooks a debt of gratitude, especially those who remember years when the only thing we did together with our families was laugh at movies like *The Producers*. So the least we can do is say: May the Farce be with you. ■

**Turn to page 52 for full color photos from Mel Brooks's *Spaceballs*.**

## THE OTHER MEL BROOKS



Most people know Mel Brooks as the Prince of Parody. After all, he's had a hand in everything from TV's *Get Smart* to movies like *Young Frankenstein*, *High Anxiety*, and *History of the World, Part I*. But did you know that he's also the C.B. De Mille of High Brow?

He's the power behind Brooksfilms, the high-class independent production company that's brought us movies as daring and different as *The Elephant Man* (which received eight Academy Award nominations, including one for then unknown director David Lynch); *The Doctor and the Devils*, a film adaptation of an original screenplay by poet Dylan Thomas; and *Frances*, a controversial

movie biography of actress Frances Farmer.

But, of course, Brooksfilms was also the company that placed its imprimatur on *The Fly*, David Cronenberg's horror film blockbuster. "Yeah," says Brooks in his characteristic tone, more reminiscent of a New York street kid than a high-powered film executive. "We were responsible for the escape of *The Fly* on this planet."

Brooks has been a fan of Cronenberg's for some time. "I loved *The Dead Zone* and *Scanners*, and I loved *Videodrome* to distraction," he says. "The center of his work always seemed artistic, not exploitative. So I was drawn to him."

At the time of *The Fly*, however, Cronenberg was working on *Total Recall* for Dino DeLaurentiis, and *The Fly* was to be directed by an unknown named Robert Beerman ("He made a short suspense film that I adored," says Brooks). But *Total Recall* was postponed, and Beerman had to beg off *The Fly*. So Cronenberg and Brooks had their fateful meeting.

When reminded that Martin Scorsese once said that Cronenberg looked like a "Beverly Hills gynecologist" instead of a master of horror, Brooks laughed. "I had the same reaction to David Lynch. I had seen *Eraserhead*, and when I was introduced to Lynch

by Stuart Cornfeld (who subsequently produced *The Fly*), I expected to meet a young Max Reinhardt. But in walks Charles Lindberg in a leather jacket and a white flying scarf. It was hysterical."

Brooks's behind the scenes maneuvering as a film exec can be as demented as any of his comedies. When Cronenberg's agent asked for seven-hundred fifty thousand for his client, for example, Brooks threw him for a loop by offering a cool million. "The people at Fox laughed when they heard this," says Brooks. "But much to Barry Diller's credit he understood that if Cronenberg directed, he'd shoot in Toronto, where he's always worked, and that would save us millions of dollars," he explains. It's hard to fault Brooks's eccentric tactics, considering what a smash hit the film turned out to be.

But the movie mogul is not resting on his laurels. In fact, among the many projects on Brooksfilms' current production schedule is—you guessed it—an as yet unannounced sequel to *The Fly*. They are also financing *84 Charing Cross Road*, an adaptation of Helen Hanff's bittersweet autobiographical story. Could it be the Prince of Parody is becoming King of Quality?

—James Verniere



# ILLUMINATIONS



## MAGIC UNDERFOOT

Once, on a cool July morning eleven years ago, I rose just after dawn to take a walk north from my apartment in Manhattan's Washington Heights, through the twisting, rock-lined paths of Fort Tryon Park. The air was dense and electric with the energy of an impending storm. The fog, curling up the steep, wooded hillside from the river, obscured all trace of civilization, leaving only the rocks and trees.

Through a parting in the clouds, a medieval castle reared up out of the mists. Suddenly, I was unbound from time. It was as if I looked out through the eyes of one of my ancestors onto a time seven centuries earlier.

The wind shifted, the castle vanished. Now I stood on a bluff overlooking the Hudson. As I watched, a sailing ship battled its way upriver against the wind. I was seeing what an Abanaki or Leni-Lenape might have seen when Hudson's *Half Moon* sailed this same passage nearly four hundred years ago.

There was a low booming, like the sound of cannon. In the thicket nearby I heard the soft crack of twigs, the rustle of figures moving through the underbrush. I turned to see a bright flash of red through the trees below the ramparts where I now stood. Any moment a British soldier, face flushed, musket raised, might come charging up the slope to claim this place for the Crown.

The leaves began to stir in the wind as fat drops of dusty rain began to fall. My heart was beating faster as I hurried toward a low house of fieldstone that might have been only a century old. My own time was rushing toward me with the storm. I stepped inside to find a brightly-lit snack bar with gaudy plastic signs and a juke

box playing a Country and Western tune.

As I sat at the window, drinking bitter coffee from a styrofoam cup and watching the rain sluice down against the stained glass, the world put itself back in order around me. The castle was the Cloisters museum, home of the Unicorn Tapestries. The tall ship was only a visitor from Denmark, here to celebrate the beginning of our nation's third century. And the booming of cannon was the sound of thunder.

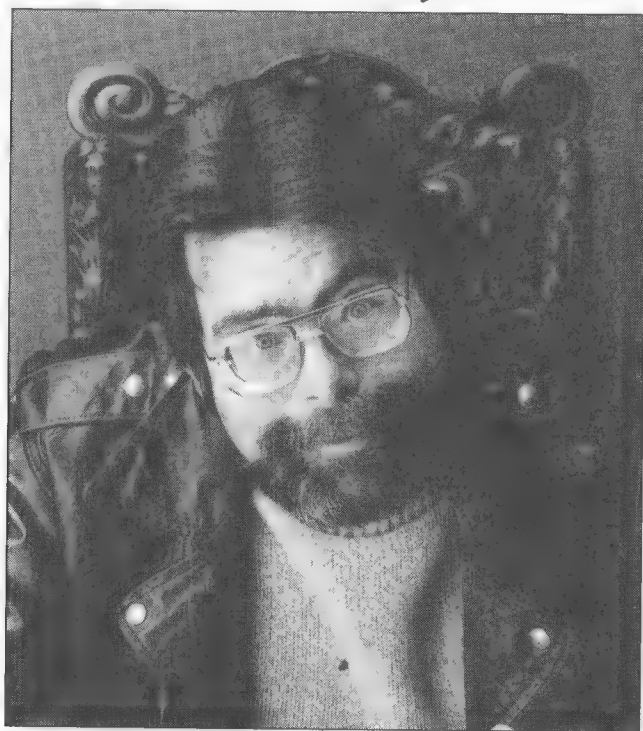
Since that day, I've come to have a new understanding of the nature of time. I now believe that the past coexists with the present, and that each place has its own special, timeless magic. I can't look at the buildings and pavements of our cities and towns without seeing the history that lies under our feet.

Most of my own people have lived on this land for more than three and a half centuries. Almost as much time separates me from those first settlers as separates them from that long-ago time of castles and cloisters.

It seems to me it's time we Americans found our own magic, one that derives from this place and its history. While the folktales and ghost stories of Europe, the Celtic myths and Norse sagas, are a rich and wonder-filled legacy, there are wealth of cultures and traditions for writers and artists to draw upon right here at hand. One place to begin is by acknowledging the wisdom and power of the peoples who first settled this land, who learned its own special magic and taught the rest of us how to survive here.

—Tappan King

# ILLUMINATIONS



## AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING

Stephen King came to my house the other day. He talked about censorship, read a couple of selections from his new novel *Misery*, and answered a lot of questions about fame, writing, and films. Best of all, it was free.

Okay, so there's more to it than that. Here's the scoop—on September 22, 1986, King was videotaped lecturing at the Virginia Beach Public Library during their "Banned Books Week."

The ninety-minute program is very stylishly produced, with professional opening and closing credits, good sound and editing.

The lecture was divided into three roughly equal parts. First, in deference to the occasion, King speaks very strongly about censorship, excoriating conservatives and Fundamentalists for attempting to dictate the morality of others. He also urges young readers whose schools remove

books from their libraries to "run, don't walk" to a library or bookstore and find out what it is these people don't want them to know.

The middle section of the tape consists of two lengthy readings from *Misery*, specifically the scenes where the demented Annie Wilkes learns that writer Paul Sheldon has killed off her favorite character, and then forces him to carry out "the ultimate act of book-banning."

The final third of the program consists of King taking questions from the audience, first from a box of written questions, and then directly. He seems to be having fun and he interacts with the group well, speaking frankly about the price of fame, his upcoming projects, times when he's actually scared himself, and other topics.

This is the first permanent record of a King lecture made available to the public, and is also the first recording of the

author reading from his work—not counting a Recorded Books audiotape of the introduction to *Skeleton Crew*. As such, it is of particular interest to Stephen King fans.

If you're interested in viewing the tape, you might be able to get a copy through your local public library by means of an interstate inter-library loan program. It's not quite the same as having Mr. King over for dinner, but—for now at least—it's the next best thing.

—Tyson Blue

## FORSTCHEN IN MAINE'S EYES

Science fiction novelist Bill Forstchen asserts he is being snubbed by the Maine Arts Commission because he writes nationally-known sf instead of obscure poetry.

The commission, a branch of the National Endowment for the Arts, rejected him from its artists-in-the-schools program two years in a row, while accepting a series of "artsy-type poets," Forstchen said.

Forstchen is appealing the rejection because he feels popular writing ought to be given more attention in school.

"When I first started

publishing, I found there is a lot of power in science fiction writing to influence children toward a positive future," he said.

Forstchen is a Maine resident whose published novels include *Into the Sea of Stars* and *The Ice Prophet Trilogy*. Before turning full-time writer, he taught ancient history in high school.

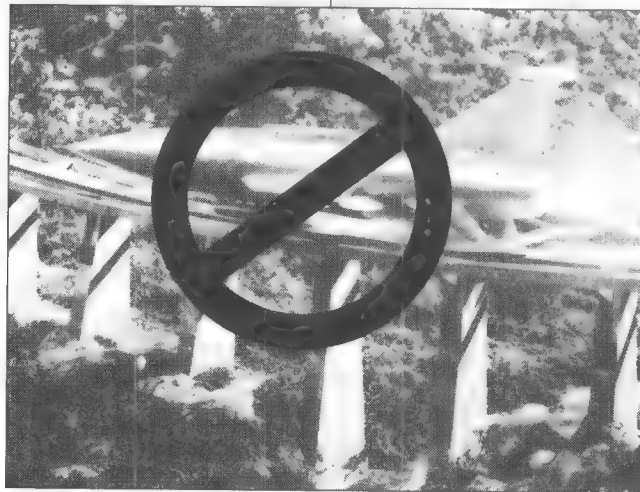
He applied to become part of the commission's artists-in-the-schools program, confident that "I had good qualifications, not only as an author but as an educator."

"Both times I applied, I was hammered by the fact I was writing science fiction," he said.

Horror writer Stephen King, coming to Forstchen's aid, wrote the Governor of Maine a haunting letter that accused the arts commission of "genre racism."

The commission's executive director, Alden Wilson, said the commission's panel of experts rejected Forstchen because "they did not find Mr. Forstchen's work to be of a standard which they apply to all individuals."

Instead, the panel appointed several poets published privately only, along with two mainstream novelists who haven't been published at





# ILLUMINATIONS

all, one of whom is still at work on his first book.

"We have the most highly-qualified people we could find," said Wilson.

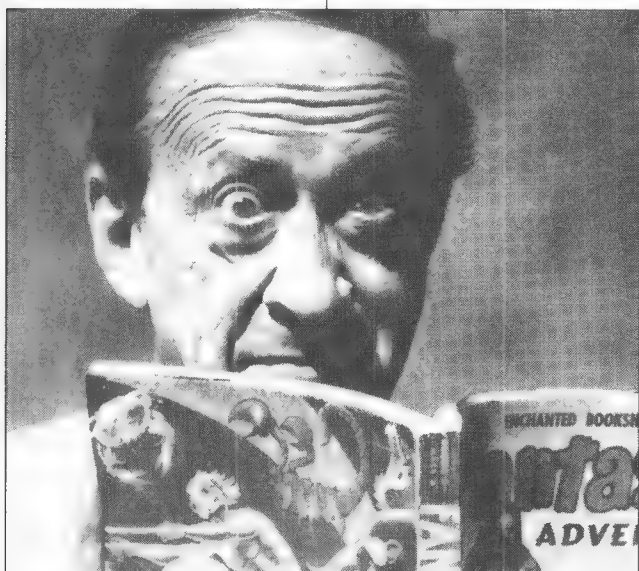
Along with his appeal, Forstchen said he is proposing a state-sponsored contest for young writers of genre fiction—science fiction, fantasy, mysteries, suspense stories, "the kind

of stories that kids want to read anyway."

"Wouldn't it be nice, one day of the year, for this state's young writers to receive as much attention as a winning basketball team?" he said.

If he loses on the appeal, Forstchen said, "I will apply all over again. Absolutely."

—Ron Wolfe



## THE RETURN OF LEFTY FEEP

The world knows Robert Bloch as the author of *Psycho*, the novel that Alfred Hitchcock turned into one of his most unsettling and unforgettable films. But there's a lighter side to the master of fear—a talent for humorous fantasy, the kind that tickles ribs, splits sides, and causes usually sedate sourpusses to roll in the aisles.

Back in the '40s the irrepressible Bloch proved it by writing a series of rollicking yarns about a racetrack tout named Lefty Feep. Feep was a fast-talking fedora-flipping zootsuit zapper, always out to make a fast killing—and more likely to meet up with daffy doctors, unlikely inventors, or gorgeous "ginches" than he was to strike it rich. And,

of course, even more likely to find himself up to his skinny neck in buffoonery and lampoonery.

The Feep stories have been for the most part out of print for decades, but now, finally, they've been collected by a press with the unlikely name of *Creatures at Large*, in a book called *Through Time and Space with Lefty Feep*. The book includes the eight original Feep stories, plus a brand new one (concerning Feep's traveling via time machine into the eighties) that Bloch wrote especially for the collection.

*Through Time and Space with Lefty Feep* is available as a trade paperback for \$12.95 (\$40.00 for the signed slipcase edition) from *Creatures at Large*, P.O. Box 687, 1082 Grand Teton Drive, Pacifica, CA 94044.

## RADIO- VISION

*"This is the witching hour. It is the hour when dogs howl, and evil is let loose upon a sleeping world. Want to hear about it?"*

That forboding invitation signaled the start of another episode of *Lights Out*, a series of horror stories that lurked on the radio in the early 1940s, and now lurks on cable television.

Radio? . . . on television? You heard it right. The Cable Radio Network is a package of old-time radio programs that is being played by Tulsa Cable of Tulsa Oklahoma, each with a video that shows what people used to look at when they listened to the radio:

Namely, the radio.

The idea began when Carl Bartholomew, the systems Creative Director, recalled the Golden Age of radio drama in the 1930s and '40s, and wished he could hear some of those old shows again.

Like Fibber McGee and Molly, the Great Gildersleeve, or *The Green Hornet*, but particularly those scary shows that sent shivers through even the sturdiest of console receivers.

Bartholomew collected

one hundred eighty-two hours of taped radio programs with the plan of airing them on cable.

The question was what to show on the screen during a radio broadcast, since the whole idea of radio was for the listener to imagine how things looked.

"I remember just sitting around, looking at the radio," Bartholomew says. "That's what we did as a family."

So he produced a series of videos that show an old-time radio with a glowing dial. "We give you something to look at, but you don't have to look at it," Bartholomew says.

A black cat wanders into the video that goes with four of the creepiest shows: *The Shadow*, *Lights Out*, *Suspense*, and *The Inner Sanctum*. (Remember? "Through the squeaking door for another half hour of horror . . .")

The creepiest by far is an episode of *Lights Out* that still gives Bartholomew the chills.

"I remember the actor saying, 'Good Lord, he's turned—inside out!'"

"Only radio could do that," he says.

"You can just imagine how horrifying that would look."

—Ron Wolfe

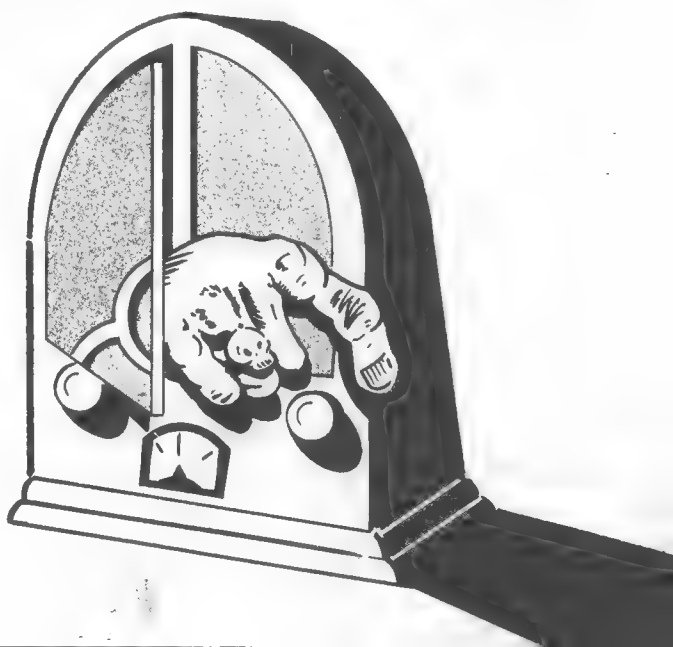


ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL J. MARINGELLI

# ILLUMINATIONS



## MANY HAPPY RETURNS

So, you thought the odyssey of Number Six ended when "Fall Out," the seventeenth episode of Patrick McGoochan's cult classic television series *The Prisoner*, aired twenty years ago, did you? Guess again.

First of all, in early 1987, Chicago-based MPI Home Video will be releasing a newly-discovered alternate version of "The Chimes of Big Ben," the second episode of the series. The new version contains different opening and closing credits and theme music, as well as new and different scenes from those in the original version. Price information, as well as a firm release date, had not yet been confirmed at presstime.

Also, CBS has announced that they are currently planning a new special, characterized as a "remake/continuation" of

the series entitled *The Prisoner Released*. Although McGoochan is not involved with the project at this point, the network is reportedly negotiating with him.

At the same time, McGoochan himself has also assembled a feature-length version of his original series, and is "open to offers" for that, and is also reported to have authored a new *Prisoner* feature of his own, which he hopes to direct and star in.

Also, a new soundtrack album of *Prisoner* themes and other music was released recently by Six of One, the British-based "Prisoner Appreciation Society" (for U.S. information, write Six of One, P.O. Box 172, Hatfield, PA 19940), with a second LP coming very soon. Now if only someone would tell us what it was about.

—Tyson Blue

## FIRST POOCH SEES GHOST

President Ronald Reagan said, in a speech given February 12, 1987, that he believes his dog Rex may be haunted by the ghost of Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Reagan, addressing students at the Old Executive Office Building, referred to the well-known occult legends involving the 16th President and numerous sightings of Lincoln's ghost in the White House.

"I am puzzled," the President remarked, "because every once in a while our little dog Rex will start down that long hall toward [the Lincoln bedroom] just glaring as if he's seeing something and barking. And he stops in front of Lincoln's door, the bedroom door. And once, early on in this, I just couldn't understand it. So I went down and I opened the door, and I stepped in and I turned around for him to come on, and he stood there, stood barking and growling and then started backing away, and would not go in the

room." The President expressed confusion as to why the First Pooch might be so hostile to Lincoln's spirit (which leaves open the possibility that perhaps Rex actually sees the ghost of Lyndon B. Johnson who, during his White House tenure, occasionally picked up his dogs by their ears).

Mr. Reagan admitted that "I haven't seen [the ghost] myself"—or, if he has, doesn't remember—but went on to say he hopes to encounter President Lincoln. "I don't have any fear at all. I think it would be very wonderful to have a little meeting with him, and possibly very helpful." Mr. Reagan did not speculate on the agenda for such a meeting, or whether Mr. Lincoln, dead since 1865, would be offered an administration post.

Coincidentally, that same week former Presidential press spokesman Larry Speakes, referring to the Iran-contra affair, described Mr. Reagan as being "in a universe all his own."

—Mark Arnold





# LIGHTS OUT

*In the darkness after the Fire  
what awful powers dare  
to show their faces?*

by Robert R. McCammon

ILLUSTRATION BY JOE GYURCSAK

**T**he ultimate horror has happened. Manhattan lies in ashes, and summer snow sweeps across the fields of the heartland.

In an America wracked by destruction, the predators begin to gather . . . an ex-mercenary who sees nightmare visions of power; a young computer genius who makes a game of murder; and a cunning evil as old as time.

Facing them will be unlikely heroes . . . a bag lady who discovers a miracle in the ruins of New York City; a giant wrestler who must protect with his life what may be the last hope of the human race; and a child called Swan, who must find her way across a blasted land of unspeakable horrors.

Sister Creep—who carries her worldly possessions in a canvas bag—awakens in a drainage pipe deep in the New York City subway system. She had come to this netherworld seeking rest the night before; this morning there was an earthquake, a cracking of concrete and a roar of flame, the screams of angels trying to reach Heaven on burning wings. That quickly, the course of her life is forever changed.

I'm in Hell! Sister Creep thought hysterically. I'm dead and in Hell and burning with the sinners!

Another wave of raw pain crashed over her. "Help me, Jesus!" she tried to scream, but she could only manage a hoarse, animalish moan. She sobbed, clenching her teeth until the pain had ebbed again. She lay in total darkness, and she thought she could hear the screams of the burning sinners from the distant depths of Hell—faint, horrible wailings and shrieks that came floating to her like the odors of

brimstone, steam and scorched flesh that had brought her back to consciousness.

Dear Jesus, save me from Hell! she begged. Don't let me burn forever!

The fierce pain returned, gnawing at her. She contorted into a fetal position, and water sloshed into her face and up her nose. She half sputtered, half screamed and drew a breath of acrid, steamy air. Water, she thought. Water. I'm lying in water. And the memories began to glow in her feverish mind like hot coals at the bottom of a grill.

She sat up, her body heavy and swollen, and when she lifted a hand to her face the blisters on her cheeks and forehead broke, streaming fluids. "I'm not in Hell," she rasped. "I'm not dead . . . yet." She remembered now where she was, but she couldn't understand what had happened, or where the fire had come from. "I'm not dead," she repeated, in a louder voice. She heard it echo in the tunnel, and she shouted "I'm not dead!" through her cracked and blistered lips.

Still, agonizing pain continued to course through her. One second she was burning up, and the next she was freezing; she was tired, very tired, and she wanted to lie down in the water again and sleep, but she was afraid that if she did she might not wake up. She reached out in the darkness, seeking her canvas bag, and had a few seconds of panic when she couldn't find it. Then her hands touched charred and soggy canvas and she drew the bag to her, clutching it as closely as a child.

Sister Creep tried to stand. Her legs gave way almost at once, so she sat in the water enduring the pain and trying to summon up her strength. The blisters on her face were puckering again, tightening her face like a

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# LIGHTS OUT

mask. Lifting her hand, she felt along her forehead and then up into her hair; her cap was gone, and her hair felt like the stubby grass of a lawn that had gone a whole sweltering summer without a drop of rain. I'm burned baldheaded! she thought, and a half giggle, half sob came up from her throat. More blisters burst on her scalp, and she quickly took her hand away because she didn't want to know any more. She tried to stand again, and this time she made it all the way up.

She touched the edge of the tunnel floor, at a level just above her stomach's bulge. She was going to have to pull herself out by sheer strength. Her shoulders were still throbbing from the effort of tearing the grate loose, but that pain was nothing compared to the suffering of her blistered skin. Sister Creep tossed the canvas bag up; sooner or later she'd have to force herself to climb out and get it. She placed her palms on the concrete and tensed herself to push upward, but her willpower evaporated, and she stood there thinking that some maintenance man was going to come down here in a year or two and find a skelton where a living woman had once been.

She pushed upward. The strained muscles of her shoulders shrieked with pain, and one elbow threatened to give way. But as she started to topple backward into the hole she brought a knee up and got it on the edge, then got the other knee up. Blisters burst on her arms and legs with little wet popping sounds. She scrabbled over the edge like a crab and lay on her stomach on the tunnel floor, dizzy and breathing heavily, her hands again clutching the bag.

Get up, she thought. Get moving, you slob bucket, or you're going to die here.

She stood up, holding her bag protectively in front of her and began to stumble through the darkness; her legs were stiff as chunks of wood, and several times she fell over rubble or broken cables. But she paused only long enough to catch her breath and fight back the pain, and then she struggled to her feet and went on.

She bumped into a ladder and climbed it, but the shaft was blocked by cables, chunks of concrete and pipe; she returned to the tunnel and kept going in

search of a way out. In some places the air was hot and thin, and she took little gulps of breath to keep from passing out. She felt her way along the tunnel, came to dead ends of jumbled debris and had to retrace her path, found other ladders that ascended to blocked shafts or manhole covers that refused to be budged. Her mind battered back and forth like a caged animal. One step at a time, she told herself. One step and then the next gets you where you're going.

Blisters rose and fell on her face, arms and legs. She stopped and sat down for a while to rest, her lungs wheezing in the heavy air. There were

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*No God of Creation  
would destroy his  
masterpiece in  
one fit of flame  
like a petulant  
child. This was  
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out sense or  
purpose or sanity.*

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no sounds of subway trains or cars or burning sinners. Something terrible's happened up there, she thought. Not the Rapture, not the Second Coming—something terrible.

Sister Creep forced herself onward. One step at a time. One step and then the next.

She found another ladder and looked up. About twenty feet above, at the top of the shaft, was a half moon of murky light. She climbed up until she was near enough to touch a manhole cover, shaken two inches out of its socket by the same shock wave that had made the tunnel vibrate. She got the fingers of one hand in between the iron and the concrete and shoved the manhole cover out of the way.

The light was the color of dried blood, and as hazy as if filtered through layers of thick gauze. Still, she had to squint until her eyes were used to light again.

She was looking up at the sky, but a kind of sky she'd never seen before: dirty brown clouds were spinning over Manhattan, and flickers of blue lightning cracked out of them. A hot, bitter wind swirled into her face,

the force of it almost knocking her loose from the ladder. In the distance there was the rumble of thunder, but a different kind of thunder than she'd ever heard—this sounded like a sledgehammer banging iron. The wind made a howling noise as it swept into the manhole, pushing her backward, but she pulled herself and her bag up the last two rungs of the ladder and crawled into the outside world again.

The wind blew a storm of grit into her face, and she was blinded for a few seconds. When her vision cleared again, she saw that she had come out of the tunnel into what looked like a junkyard.

Around her were the crushed hulks of cars, taxis and trucks, some of them melted together to form strange sculptures of metal. The tires on some of the vehicles were still smoking, while others had dissolved into black puddles. Gaping fissures had burst open in the pavement, some of them five and six feet wide; through many of the cracks came gouts of steam or water like gushing geysers. She looked around, dazed and uncomprehending, her eyes slitted against the gritty wind. In some places the earth had collapsed, and in others there were mountains of rubble, miniature Everests of metal, stone and glass. Between them the wind shrieked and turned, spun and rose around the fragments of buildings, many of which had been shaken apart right to their steel skeletons, which in turn were warped and bent like licorice sticks. Curtains of dense smoke from burning buildings and heaps of debris flapped before the rushing wind, and lightning streaked to earth from the black heart of roiling, immense clouds. She couldn't see the sun, couldn't even tell where it lay in the turbulent sky. She looked for the Empire State Building, but there were no more skyscrapers; all the buildings she could see had been sheared off, though she couldn't tell if the Empire State was still standing or not because of the smoke and dust. It was not Manhattan anymore, but a ravaged junkyard of rubble mountains and smoke-filled ravines.

Judgment of God, she thought. God has struck down an evil city, has swept all the sinners down to burn to Hell forever! Crazy laughter rang out inside her, and as she lifted her face toward the dirty clouds the fluids of burst blisters streamed down her cheeks.

A spear of lightning hit the exposed framework of a nearby building, and sparks danced madly in the air. Be-

yond the rise of a huge mountain of debris, Sister Creep could see the funnel of a tornado in the distance, and another one writhing to the right. Up in the clouds, fiery things were being tossed like red balls in the hands of a juggler. All gone; all destroyed, she thought. The end of the world. Praise God! Praise blessed Jesus! The end of the world, and all the sinners burning in—

She clasped her hands over her ears and screamed. Something inside her brain cracked like a funhouse mirror that existed only to reflect a distorted world, and as the fragments of the funhouse mirror fell apart other images were revealed behind it: herself as a younger, more attractive woman pushing a stroller in a shopping mall; a suburban brick house with a small green yard and a station wagon in the driveway; a town with a main street and a statue in the square; faces, some of them dark and indistinct, others just on the edge of memory; and then the blue flashing lights and the rain and the demon in a yellow raincoat, reaching out and saying, "Give her to me, lady. It's okay, just give her to me now..."

All gone, all destroyed! Judgment of God! Praise Jesus!

"Just give her to me now..."

No, she thought. No!

All gone, all destroyed! All the sinners, burning in Hell!

No! No! No!

And then she opened her mouth and shrieked because everything was gone and destroyed in fire and ruin, and in that instant she realized no God of Creation would destroy His masterpiece in one fit of flame like a petulant child. This was not Judgment Day, or Rapture, or the Second Coming—this had nothing to do with God; this was utter, evil destruction without sense or purpose or sanity.

For the first time since crawling out of the manhole Sister Creep looked at her blistered hands and arms, at the tattered rags of her clothing. Her skin was splotted with angry red burns, the blisters stretched tight with yellow fluid. Her bag was just barely held together by scraps of canvas, her belongings spilling out through burned holes. And then around her, in the pall of dust and smoke, she saw other things that at first her mind had not let her see: flattened, charred things that could only remotely be recognized as human remains. A pile of them lay almost at her feet, as if heaped there by someone sweeping out a coal scuttle. They littered the

street, lay half in and half out of the crushed cars and taxis; here was one wrapped around the remnants of a bicycle, there was another with its teeth showing startlingly white against the crisped, featureless face. Hundreds of them lay around her, their bones melded into shapes of surrealistic horror.

Lightning flashed, and the wind wailed with a banshee voice of the dead around Sister Creep's ears.

She ran.

The wind whipped into her face, blinding her with smoke dust and ashes. She ducked her head, hobbling



up the side of a rubble mountain, and she realized she'd left her bag behind but she couldn't bear returning to that valley of the dead. She tripped over debris, dislodging an avalanche of junk that cascaded around her legs—shattered television sets and stereo equipment, the melted mess of home computers, ghetto blasters, radios, the burned rags of men's silk suits and women's designer dresses, broken fragments of fine furniture, charred books, antique silverware reduced to chunks of metal. And everywhere there were more smashed vehicles and bodies buried in the wreckage—hundreds of bodies and pieces of bodies, arms and legs protruding from the debris as stiffly as those of department store mannequins. She reached the top of the mountain, where the hot wind was so fierce she had to fall to her knees to keep from being thrown off. Looking in all directions, she saw the full extent of the disaster: To the north, the few remaining trees in Central Park were burning, and fires extended all along what had been Eighth Avenue, glowing like blood-red rubies behind the curtain of smoke; to

the east, there was no sign of Rockefeller Center or Grand Central Station, just shattered structures rising up like rotten teeth from a diseased jaw; to the south, the Empire State Building seemed to be gone, too, and the funnel of a tornado danced near Wall Street; to the west, ridges of debris marched all the way to the Hudson River. The panorama of destruction was both a pinnacle of horror and a numbing of it, because her mind reached the limit of its ability to accept and process shock and began flipping out memories of cartoons and comedies she'd seen as a child: Jetsons, Huckleberry Hound, Mighty Mouse and Three Stooges. She crouched at the top of the mountain in the grip of a shrieking wind and stared dumbly out at the ruins while a hideous fixed smile stretched her mouth, and only one sane thought got through: Oh my Jesus, what's happened to the magic place?

And the answer was: All gone, all destroyed.

"Get up," she said to herself, though the wind swept her voice away. "Get up. You think you're gonna stay here? You can't stay here! Get up, and take one step at a time. One step and then the next gets you where you're going."

But it was a long time before she could move again, and she stumbled down the far side of the rubble mountain like an old woman, muttering to herself.

She didn't know where she was going, nor did she particularly care. The intensity of the lightening increased, and thunder shook the ground; a black, nasty-looking drizzle began to fall from the clouds, blowing like needles before the howling wind. Sister Creep stumbled from one mountain of wreckage to the next. Off in the distance she thought she heard a woman screaming, and she called out but wasn't answered. The rain fell harder, and the wind blew into her face like a slap.

And then—she didn't know how much longer it was—she came down a ridge of debris and stopped in her tracks beside the crushed remnant of a yellow cab. A street sign stood nearby, bent almost into a knot, and it said Forty-second. Of all the buildings along the street, only one was standing.

The marquee above the Empire State theater was still blinking; advertising *Face of Death, Part Four* and *Mondo Bizarro*. On both sides of the



# LIGHTS OUT

theater building, the structures had been reduced to burned-out shells, but the theater itself wasn't even scorched. She remembered passing that theater the night before, and the brutal shove that had knocked her into the street. Smoke passed between her and the theater and she expected the building to be gone like a mirage in the next second, but when the smoke whipped on, the theater was still there, and the marquee was still blinking merrily.

Turn away, she told herself. Get the Hell out of here!

But she took one step toward it, and then the next got her where she was going. She stood in front of the theater doors and smelled buttered popcorn from within. No! she thought. It's not possible!

But it was not possible, either, that the city of New York should be turned into a tornado-swept wasteland in a handful of hours. Staring at those theater doors, Sister Creep knew that the rules of this world had been suddenly and drastically changed by a force she couldn't even begin to understand. "I'm crazy," she told herself. But the theater was real, and so was the aroma of buttered popcorn. She peered into the ticket booth, but it was empty; then she braced herself, touched the crucifix and gemclip chain that hung around her neck, and went through the doors.

There was no one behind the concession counter, but Sister Creep could hear the movie going on in the auditorium behind a faded red curtain; there was the grating sound of a car crash, and then a narrator's voice intoning, "And here before your eyes is the result of a head-on collision at sixty miles an hour."

Sister Creep reached over the counter, grabbed two Hershey bars from the display, and was about to eat one when she heard the snarl of an animal.

The sound rose, reaching the register of a human laugh. But in it Sister Creep heard the squeal of tires on a rain-slick highway and a child's piercing, heartbreaking scream: "Mommy!"

She clapped her hands over her ears until the child's cry was gone, and she stood shivering until all

memory of it had faded. The laughter was gone, too, but whoever had made it was still sitting in there, watching a movie in the middle of a destroyed city.

She crammed half a Hershey bar into her mouth, chewed and swallowed it. Behind the red curtain, the narrator was talking about rapes and murders with cool, clinical detachment. The curtain beckoned her. She ate the other half of the Hershey bar and licked her fingers. If that awful laughter swelled again, she thought, she might lose her mind, but she had to see who had made it. She walked to the curtain and slowly, slowly, drew it aside.

*By the light of  
his flaming hand  
she could see the  
shifting bones,  
the melting  
cheeks and lips,  
eyes of different  
colors surfacing  
where there were  
no sockets.*

On the screen was the bruised, dead face of a young woman, but such a sight held no power to shock Sister Creep anymore. She could see the outline of a head—someone sitting up in the front row, face tilted upward at the screen. The rest of the seats were empty. Sister Creep stared at that head, could not see the face and didn't want to, because whoever—whatever—it was couldn't possibly be human.

The head suddenly swiveled toward her.

Sister Creep drew back. Her legs wanted to run, but she didn't let them go. The figure in the front row was just staring at her as the film continued to show close-ups of people lying on coroners' slabs. And then the figure stood up from the seat, and Sister Creep heard popcorn crunch on the floor beneath its shoes. Run! she screamed inwardly. Get out! But she stood her ground, and the figure stopped before its face was revealed by the light from the concession counter.

"You're all burned up." It was the soft and pleasant voice of a young man. He was thin and tall, about six

feet four or five, dressed in a pair of dark green khaki trousers and a yellow t-shirt. On his feet were polished combat boots. "I guess it's over out there by now, isn't it?"

"All gone," she murmured. "All destroyed." She caught a dank chill, the same thing she'd experienced the previous night in front of the theater, and then it was gone. She could see the faintest impression of features on the man's face, and she thought she saw him smile, but it was a terrible smile; his mouth didn't seem to be exactly where it should. "I think ... everyone's dead," she told him.

"Not everyone," he corrected. "You're not dead, are you? And I think there are others still alive out there, too. Hiding somewhere, probably. Waiting to die. It won't be long, though. Not long for you, either."

"I'm not dead yet," she said.

"You might as well be." His chest expanded as he drew in a deep breath. "Smell that air! Isn't it sweet?"

Sister Creep started to take a backward step. The man said, almost gently, "No," and she stopped as if the most important—the only important—thing in the world was to obey.

"My best scene's coming up." He motioned toward the screen, where flames shot out of a building and broken bodies were lying on stretchers. "That's me! Standing by the car! Well, I didn't say it was a long scene." His attention drifted back to her. "Oh," he said softly. "I like your necklace." His pale hand with its long, slender fingers slid toward her throat.

She wanted to cringe away because she couldn't bear to be touched by that hand, but she was transfixed by his voice, echoing back and forth in her mind. She flinched as the cold fingers touched the crucifix. He pulled at it, but both the crucifix and the gemclip chain were sealed to her skin.

"It's burned on," the man said. "We'll fix that."

With a quick snap of his wrist he ripped the crucifix and chain off, taking Sister Creep's skin with it. Pain shot through her like an electric shock, at the same time breaking up the echo of the man's command and clearing her head. Tears burned fiery trails down her cheeks.

The man held his hand palm up, the crucifix and chain dangling before Sister Creep's face. He began to sing in the voice of a little boy: "Here we go 'round the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush ..."

(continued on page 31)







# THE OTHERS

*Across the crowd he saw a face,  
strange, yet teasingly familiar.*

by Joyce Carol Oates

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID LEVINSON

**E**arly one evening in a crowd of people, most of them commuters, he happened to see, quite by accident—he'd taken a slightly different route that day, having left the building in which he worked by an entrance he rarely used—and this, as he'd recall afterward, with the fussy precision which had characterized him since childhood, and helped to account for his success in his profession, because there was renovation being done in the main lobby—a man he had not seen in years, or was it decades: a face teasingly familiar, yet made strange by time like an old photograph about to disintegrate into its elements.

Spence followed the man into the street, into a blowsy damp dusk, but did not catch up to him and introduce himself: that wasn't his way. He was certain he knew the man, and that the man knew him, but how, or why, or

from what period in his life the man dated, he could not have said. Spence was forty-two years old and the other seemed to be about that age, yet oddly, older: his skin liverish, his profile vague as if seen through an element transparent yet dense, like water; his clothing—handsome tweed overcoat, sharply creased gray trousers—hanging slack on him, as if several sizes too large.

Outside, Spence soon lost sight of the man in a swarm of pedestrians crossing the street; and made no effort to locate him again. But for most of the ride home on the train he thought of nothing else: who was that man, why was he certain the man would have known him, what were they to each other, resembling each other only very slightly, yet close as twins? He felt stabs of excitement that left him weak and breathless but it wasn't until

# THE OTHERS

that night, when he and his wife were undressing for bed, that he said, or heard himself say, in a voice of bemused wonder, and dread: "I saw someone today who looked just like my cousin Sandy—"

"Did I know Sandy?" his wife asked.

"—my cousin Sandy who died, who drowned, when we were both in college."

"But did I know him?" his wife asked. She cast him an impatient sidelong glance and smiled her sweet-derisive smile. "It's difficult to envision him if I've never seen him, and if he's been dead for so long, why should it matter so much to you?"

Spence had begun to perspire. His heart beat hard and steady as if in the presence of danger. "I don't understand what you're saying," he said.

"The actual words, or their meaning?"

"The words."

She laughed as if he had said something witty, and did not answer him. As he fell asleep he tried not to think of his cousin Sandy whom he had not seen in twenty years and whom he'd last seen in an open casket in a funeral home in Damascus, Minnesota.

The second episode occurred a few weeks later when Spence was in line at a post office, not the post office he usually frequented but another, larger, busier, in a suburban township adjacent to his own, and the elderly woman in front of him drew his attention: wasn't she, too, someone he knew? Or had known, many years ago? He stared, fascinated, at her stitched-looking skin, soft and puckered as a glove of some exquisite material, and unnaturally white; her eyes that were small, sunken, yet shining; her astonishing hands—delicate, even skeletal, discolored by liver spots like coins, yet with rings on several fingers, and in a way rather beautiful. The woman appeared to be in her mid-nineties, if not older: fuzzy, anxious, very possibly addled: complaining ceaselessly to herself, or to others by way of herself. Yet her manner was mirthful; nervous bustling energy crackled about her like invisible bees.

He believed he knew who she was: Miss Reuter, a teacher of his in elementary school. Whom he had not seen in more years than he wanted to calculate.

Miss Reuter, though enormously aged, was able, it seemed, to get around by herself. She carried a large rather glitzy shopping bag made of a silvery material, and in this bag, and in another at her feet, she was rummaging for her change purse, as she called it, which she could not seem to find. The post office clerk waited with a show of strained patience; the line now consisted of a half-dozen people.

Spence asked Miss Reuter—for

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*"I seem to be seeing, more and more, these people," Spence said, "people I don't think are truly there. I think they're dead. Dead people."*

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surely it was she: while virtually unrecognizable she was at the same time unmistakable—if she needed some assistance. He did not call her by name and as she turned to him, in exasperation, and gratitude—as if she knew that he, or someone, would come shortly to her aid—she did not seem to recognize him. Spence paid for her postage and a roll of stamps and Miss Reuter, still rummaging in her bag, vexed, cheerful, befuddled, thanked him without looking up at him. She insisted it must be a loan, and not a gift, for she was, she said, "Not yet an object of public charity."

Afterward Spence put the incident out of his mind, knowing the woman was dead. It was purposeless to think of it, and would only upset him.

After that he began to see them more frequently. The Others, as he thought of them. On the street, in restaurants, at church; in the building in which he worked; on the very floor, in the very department in which his office was located. (He was a tax lawyer for one of the largest of American "conglomerates"—yes and

very well paid.) One morning his wife saw him standing at a bedroom window looking out toward the street. She poked him playfully in the ribs. "What's wrong?" she said. "None of this behavior suits you."

"There's someone out there, at the curb."

"No one's there."

"I have the idea he's waiting for me."

"Oh yes, I do see someone," his wife said carelessly. "He's often there. But I doubt that he's waiting for you."

She laughed, as at a private joke. She was a pretty, freckled, snub-nosed woman given to moments of mysterious amusement. Spence had married her long ago in a trance of love from which he had yet to awaken.

Spence said, his voice shaking. "I think—I'm afraid I think I might be having a nervous breakdown. I'm so very, very afraid."

"No," said his wife, "you're the sanest person I know. All surface and no cracks, fissures, potholes."

Spence turned to her. His eyes were filling with tears.

"Don't joke. Have pity."

She made no reply; seemed about to drift away; then slipped an arm around his waist and nudged her head against his shoulder in a gesture of camaraderie. Whether mocking, or altogether genuine, Spence could not have said.

"It's just that I'm so afraid."

"Yes, you've said."

"—of losing my mind. Going mad."

She stood for a moment, peering out toward the street. The elderly gentleman standing at the curb glanced back but could not have seen them, or anyone, behind the lacy bedroom curtains. He was well-dressed, and carried an umbrella. An umbrella? Perhaps it was a cane.

Spence said, "I seem to be seeing, more and more, these people—people I don't think are truly there."

"He's there."

"I think they're dead. Dead people."

His wife drew back and cast him a sidelong glance, smiling mysteriously. "It does seem to have upset you," she said.

"Since I know they're not there—"

"He's there,"

"—so I must be losing my mind. A kind of schizophrenia, waking dreams, hallucinations—"

Spence was speaking excitedly, and did not know exactly what he was saying. His wife drew away from him



in alarm, or distaste.

"You take everything so personally," she said.

One morning shortly after the New Year, when the air was sharp as a knife, and the sky so blue it brought tears of pain to one's eyes, Spence set off on the underground route from his train station to his building. Beneath the city's paved surface was a honeycomb of tunnels, some of them damp and befouled but most of them in good condition, with, occasionally, a corridor of gleaming white tiles that looked as if it had been lovingly polished by hand. Spence preferred aboveground, or believed he should prefer aboveground, for reasons vague and puritanical, but in fierce weather he made his way underground, and worried only that he might get lost, as he sometimes did. (Yet, even lost, he had only to find an escalator or steps leading to the street—and he was no longer lost.)

This morning, however, the tunnels were far more crowded than usual. Spence saw a preponderance of elderly men and women, with here and there, startling, and seemingly unnatural, a young face. Here and there, yet more startling, a child's face. A few of the faces had that air, so disconcerting to him in the past, of the eerily familiar laid upon the utterly unfamiliar; and these he resolutely ignored.

He soon fell into step with the crowd, keeping to their pace—which was erratic, surging faster along straight stretches of tunnel and slower at curves; he found it agreeable to be borne along by the flow, as of a tide. A tunnel of familiar tearstained mosaics yielded to one of the smart gleaming tunnels and that in turn to a tunnel badly in need of repair—and, indeed, being noisily repaired, by one of those crews of workmen that labor at all hours of the day and night beneath the surface of the city—and as Spence hurried past the deafening vibrations of the air hammer he found himself descending a stairs into a tunnel unknown to him: a place of warm, humming, droning sound, like conversation, though none of his fellow pedestrians seemed to be talking. Where were they going, so many people? And in the same direction?—with only, here and there, a lone, clearly lost individual bucking the tide, white-faced, eyes snatching at his as if in desperate recognition.

Might as well accompany them, Spence thought, and see. ■

# LIGHTS OUT

(continued from page 26)

His palm caught fire, the flames crawling up along his fingers. As the man's hand became a glove of flame the crucifix and chain began to melt and dribble to the floor.

"Here we go 'round the mulberry bush, so early in the mornrrning!"

Sister Creep looked into his face. By the light of the flaming hand she could see the shifting bones, the melting cheeks and lips, eyes of different colors surfacing where there were no sockets.

The last droplet of molten metal spattered to the floor. A mouth opened across the man's chin like a red-rimmed wound. The mouth grinned. "Lights out!" it whispered.

The film stopped, the frame burning away on the screen. The red curtain that Sister Creep was still holding on to burst into flames, and she screamed and jerked her hands away. A wave of sickening heat swept through the theater, the walls drooling fire.

"Tick tock, tick tock!" the man's voice continued, in a merry singsong rhythm. "Nothing ever stops the clock!"

The ceiling blazed and buckled. Sister Creep shielded her head with her arms and staggered backward through the fiery curtains as he advanced on her. Streams of chocolate ran from the concession counter. She ran toward the door, and the thing behind her brayed, "Run! Run, you pig!"

She was three strides out the door before it became a sheet of fire, and then she was running madly through the ruins of Forty-Second Street. When she dared to look back, she saw the entire theater bellowing flame, the building's roof imploding as if driven down by a brutal fist.

She flung herself behind a block of stone as a storm of glass and bricks hurtled around her. It was all over in a few seconds, but Sister Creep stayed huddled up, shivering with terror, until all the bricks had stopped falling. She peered out from behind her shelter.

Now the ruins of the theater were indistinguishable from any of the other piles of ash. The theater was

gone, and so—thankfully—was the thing with the flaming hand.

She touched the raw circle of flesh that ringed her throat and her fingers came away bloody. It took another moment for her to grasp that the crucifix and chain were really gone. She couldn't remember where she'd gotten it from, but it was something she'd been proud of. She'd thought that it protected her, too, and now she felt naked and defenseless.

She knew she'd looked into the face of evil there in that cheap theater.

The black rain was falling harder. Sister Creep curled up her hand pressed to her bleeding throat, and she closed her eyes and prayed for death.

Jesus Christ was not coming in His flying saucer after all, she realized. Judgment Day had destroyed the innocent in the same flames that killed the guilty, and the Rapture was a lunatic's dream.

A sob of anguish broke from her throat. She prayed, Please, Jesus, take me home, please, right now, this minute, please, please . . .

But when she opened her eyes the black rain was still falling.

The wind was getting stronger, and now it carried a winter's chill. She was drenched, sick to her stomach, and her teeth were chattering.

Wearily, she sat up. Jesus was not coming today. She would have to die later, she decided. There was no use lying out here like a fool in the rain.

One step, she thought. One step and the next gets you where you're going.

Where that was, she didn't know, but from now on she'd have to be very careful, because that evil thing with no face and all faces could be lurking anywhere. *Anywhere*. The rules had changed. The Promised Land was a boneyard, and Hell itself had broken through the Earth's surface.

She had no idea what had caused such destruction, but a terrible thing occurred to her: What if everywhere was like this? She let the thought go before it burned into her brain, and she struggled to her feet.

The wind staggered her. The rain was falling so heavily that she couldn't see beyond four feet in any direction. She decided to go toward what she thought was north, because there might be a tree left to rest under in Central Park.

Her back bowed against the elements, she started with one step. ■



# THE SKY IS A CIRCLE

EXPLORING THE NATIVE  
AMERICAN SPIRIT WORLD

by Ariel Remler

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT EAGLE

In the past quarter of a century there has been a rediscovery of some of the values and beliefs of American Indian cultures. It began in a time of political foment and activism for a new generation both inside Indian communities and in the culture at large. This superficial commingling of cultures manifested itself in a number of ways. Symbols like moccasins, headbands, and fringed jackets became part of the hippie



costume, as students began reading Carlos Casteneda's accounts of his initiation by a Yaqui Indian sorcerer named Don Juan, and the legacy of Wounded Knee came circling back into our consciousness.

As interest grew, waned, and increased again we begin to discover the breadth of the contribution Native Americans have made to what we call the "American" way of life. Indians domesticated corn, tobacco, and sweet potatoes, cocoa, chocolate, and coffee; they perfected cotton and discovered the key to oral contraceptives. They invented the snowshoe, the Western saddle, and lacrosse. Extirpated and surviving tribes and nations placed hundreds of names on the land, and made a largely unacknowledged contribution to the

political and spiritual philosophies that make America different from Europe.

For example, the Law, the Great Peace of the Iroquois Confederacy was the model for our Articles of Confederation, out of which grew the Constitution. And concepts of collective democracy and individual freedom central to our political system have always been Indian ideas. Even the most central symbol of America in many media-shaped minds, the Cowboy, the individual alone in unbounded space, is essentially the transplanted European as Indian—an invention of the collective American mind. This same idea of freedom and spaciousness shows up in the most uniquely American works of art—the writings of Mark Twain and Zane Grey, in the dance



# CIRCLE

of Martha Graham, the paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe, the music of Aaron Copland and George Gershwin.

Unfortunately, this awareness and rediscovery has come at a high cost. The settlement of North and South America was largely a war of conquest, as Europeans imposed their alien values on the land and its people. Millions of Native Americans were killed, or died of intentionally or unintentionally transmitted European diseases. Many more were displaced as much of their rich oral and recorded tradition was destroyed. According to the Census Bureau, American Indians number less than 1.5 million, although many more people of mixed heritage observe traditional Indian ways. Those who live on or near reservations, in adjacent rural areas or in decaying areas of large cities often live at or below the poverty level. In urban areas, more than fifty percent are unemployed, and there is little tribal unity. Yet Native Americans have managed to retain their heritage and culture, even though there has been little support on the part of the larger culture for such preservation.

While we think of "the Indian" collectively, the North and South American continents were originally inhabited by a widely divergent collection of races and cultures. Each had its own language and dialect, method of subsistence, kinship structure, philosophy, and

## The Rock Bearers

Standing in the swirling dust of all his yesterdays, all his tomorrows, the old Indian tried to explain the departure of the Hippies from the Hopi reservation in the 1960s. "They put the stones in their vans and went away," he said. "From here they took them into our past. Now the rocks mark clan boundaries we did not have as we emerge in our future."

English cannot express what the Ute-Aztec Hopi language revealed. Nor could the Hippies, in their desperate need to find one yesterday in all their tomorrows, understand. And so, removing the feathered prayer sticks from the cairns that merely served to identify land use points, they loaded the rocks into their 1960s vans and drove to other physical geographies in their desperate hehira.

Could they have looked at a grazing buffalo, seen only a newborn calf on the endless horizon, then painted a bovine skull supported only by space in the surrounding canvas, the Hippies would have understood—as Georgia O'Keeffe did. Could they have been Billy Pilgrim in a mythical firestorm called Dresden, they might have comprehended—as Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. did. Lacking the simple medicine that puts the old Hopi at the center of his emergence, they listened to the dry voice of long distance and, with the heavy impedimenta of their frustration and all those meaningless rocks, followed its electronic call.

"They came," the endlessly young-old voice said, "to find themselves. Here is all we have of there. Skin marks the geographical boundaries of their world. Some of our young people have forgotten that too. I wish the rock bearers well."

—Thomas E. Sanders  
(Nippawanock)

religious beliefs. In some ways the Zuni of the Southwest have far less in common with the Mohawk of the Northeast, for example, than the Irish have in common with the Iranians.

Nonetheless, there are many beliefs that most Native Americans hold in common. At the center of Indian life is a respect for nature and the natural world. Most Indians believe that when they were put on Earth, they were inculcated with the obligation to preserve it and its intrinsic beauty. They feel a kinship with all living things, and subsequently feel obligated to treat them with care and respect.

Chief John Snow, a Plains Indian, writes:

"We must be good stewards of the Creator, and must not destroy or mar His works of creation. We look upon stewardship not only in terms of money and the profit of the hundredfold, but in respect for the beauty of the land and of life in harmony with the succession of the seasons . . . If pollution continues, not only animals, birds and plant life will disappear, but the [Great] Spirit will also leave. This is a great concern of the Indian people."

To the Indian, the white man seems almost extraterrestrial. Many Native Americans feel whites are not respectful of nature, valuing it aesthetically, rather than reacting to its rules and rhythms. Because the white man's god gave him dominion over nature, exploiting it became his first priority and he ignored the consequences of tempering with systems which sustain us.

As Snow suggests, the natural world always provided subsistence for Native Americans, not only in food, clothing and housing, but also in the concept of belonging to it, being part of it. Indians moderated their harvesting of deer and buffalo, wildfowl and fish, knowing their "older, wiser brothers" must breed and replenish themselves. They regarded animals as kin, and, in some tribes, it was customary to ask permission of an animal before killing it. Since Indians recognized animals as basic to survival, they are central to all culture and creation accounts. Possessed of great spiritual power, they are capable of appearing in many shapes and forms.

When the white man tries to understand Indian spirituality, he has to overcome his own cultural biases and assumptions. Barre Toelken, a journalist who lived with the Navajo for two years, cautions: "Before we see we must learn how to look."

One fundamental difference is the Indian notion of time and space. In Western cultural thought, space (the material world around us) becomes landscape; time, a river that runs through it. In that metaphor, we are in a boat on the river of time, traveling through history. The landscape we've left behind is the past; that which lies ahead is the future. The present is the ever-changing point at which our boat meets the river.

To Indians, time and space are one. The present is what is near or immediate. Both the past and the future exist on the horizon, the place where the visible world merges with the world of the spirit. For example, the pioneering linguist Benjamin Whorf discovered that the Hopi language contains no expressions that refer directly to what we think of as "time." Instead, it divides all reality into what Whorf calls "manifested" and

"manifesting" states—the subjective and the objective.

The objective state contains everything accessible to the senses, without distinguishing between the present and the past. The subjective or manifesting state comprises not only the future but all states of the heart and mind as well. Not only the human heart but the "hearts" or spirits of animals, plants, the whole natural world.

So a flower in front of a Hopi is both a present flower and an eternal flower. But the subjective *idea* of a flower includes all of its possible states: seed, bud, blossom, withered husk. For a Hopi, then, the opposite of *present* is not *past* but *absent*.

The Indian universe itself is a great circle. In the Beaver creation myth, *Yagesati* (stillness in heaven) draws, on the primeval waters, lines that divide the world into the Four Directions: East, South, West, and North. The point at which the lines cross is the link or passage between the material or ephemeral world and the eternal world of spirit.

Each direction has its own color, time of day and year, and correspondence with a stage of a human lifetime. The East is green or blood-red, and symbolizes daybreak, birth, spring. The South is yellow, the color of noon and summer, and stands for youth. The West is the dark red of sunset and fall, the time of middle age. And the North is either the black of night or the white of snow and the moon, symbolizing winter, old age and death.

As Robin and Tonia Ridington write in *The Inner Eye of Shamanism and Totemism*: "Life is not a straight line but a circle, an all-encompassing circle . . . Each day each person relives the circle of life. But after a child has

passed through the four quarters of his life his direction is toward the center . . . the axis which goes from the upper world through the center of the earth to the underworld."

In most Native American cultures the people believe in a spirit which inhabits all living things. The Sioux call the energy of the Great Holy Mystery *wakan*, and the source of that energy *Wakan Tanka*. The Ojibwa and other Algonquian peoples call it *Manitu*, the Iroquois, *Orenda*. Among the Hopi, the sun is regarded as the face of the Creator, and special ceremonies are performed to bring the return of summer, when all things thrive and grow. A tribal chieftain or priest is the earthly representative of the sun. Inside his temple burns an eternal, sacred fire, the sun on Earth.

Black Elk, the great holy man of the Ickche-Wichasha (True Human) Sioux, feels that everything is the work of the Great Spirit: "We should know that he is inside all things: the trees, the grasses, the rivers, the mountains, and the four-legged animals and the winged peoples." All other, lesser spirits are only aspects of this original unity.

Out of the mystery, power or "medicine" flows to all things. But it can be intensified. A common way of garnering spiritual power is undertaking a vision quest or spiritual journey. After preparation by fasting, special diets, or rituals and, sometimes, the use of psychotropic drugs such as jimson weed or peyote, the seeker undergoes a spiritual (and often physical) journey into the wilderness, seeking contract, in a dream or trance  
(continued on page 87)

## Spirits of Shadow

Not all of the spirits that reside in the literature and traditions of Native America are benevolent. Some are capricious, others destructive, still others truly evil. That darkness has attracted some of the most gifted talents in horror and dark fantasy.

Graham Masterton, Kathy Ptacek, William Relling Jr., Paul Witcover, and others are among the writers who have explored the more frightening aspects of the Native American heart—and some of them have explored that heart very well indeed.

Graham Masterton, a British writer with a fascination for things American, opened up the field of American Indian horror with his 1975 novel *Manitou*. The story he had to tell, about a shaman's return from the grave to avenge his people, touched a chord in the soul of the American public. It made Masterton a major name in horror.

Kathy Ptacek cites mystery writer Tony Hilerman (*Skinwalkers*), who sets his novels on the Navajo reservations of the Southwest, as a major influence on her first novel, *Shadoweyes*.

But Native America holds a deeper attraction for her. "I've always been intrigued by Pueblo culture," says Ptacek. Her most recent novel, *Kachina*, concerns a nineteenth-century professor and his wife who come to live among the Konachine—a fictional tribe reminiscent of the Pueblo. In the course of the book, the wife becomes possessed by the spirit of the Konachine corn goddess.

"When I spoke with the Pueblo," Ptacek says, "I found that there is now a rekindling of interest among them in their own heritage. They're trying to keep up with the ancient ceremonies—though much *has* been lost."

William Relling Jr.'s current novel, *Brujo*, involves the

Native American drug cult that inhabited California's Catalina Island up through the early nineteenth century. The tribe, the Pimu Indians, had the misfortune of attracting the attention of a group of bored Russian-American fur hunters, who used the tribe as game for sport hunting. In a few short years the tribe's population went from three thousand to three hundred. Well-meaning Spanish Friars brought what remained of the Pimu to St. Gabriel, on the mainland, where they died in a smallpox epidemic. The Pimu left no blood descendants.

Relling spent 1976 on a Sioux reservation in South Dakota. "The modern-day Sioux are more like cowboys than Indians," he says. "Most are Christians, but there is a small group that still holds on to the old traditions."

While researching the Indians of Central America, Paul Witcover, a young writer whose short fiction has appeared in *Night Cry* and *Asimov's SF*, became dismayed at how little of the region's Native American tradition has survived; dismayed enough that he felt a need to write about it.

"I'm attracted to what I see as a much deeper, more meaningful culture," he says. "But I can't honestly say I understand it." It's tempting, he says, to be identified with a romanticized people like the Indians of Central America. But taking the romance too far can turn people into clichés. "I try to treat characters in stories as though they were real individuals," he says, "not stereotypes."

Witcover's feelings on the renewed public interest in Native America are mixed. "It's strange how everyone seems to know what's going on in the Indians' minds," he says. "It's time they stopped being labelled 'quaint,' 'interesting,' 'simple,' 'noble,' and 'savage.'"

—AR

# THE DREAM THAT FOLLOWS DARKNESS

*They were joined by a vision  
that reached beyond the shores of time.*

by Michael Seidman

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID CELSI

And later that night, after the rain stopped, the wind began, cold and scouring the sky of clouds. It was a strong wind that blew in circles and people curled into their sleeping bags and under blankets, in tents and campers and lean-tos. Their sleep was restless, disturbed by dreams of running horses. The wind would stop, of course, and then the dawn would begin, a mad palette followed by a sky so clear and blue and high that it would almost hurt to look at it. It would be a beautiful day. A perfect day.

For an accident. That's how Malek thought of it, anyway. An accidental meeting. They happen, they're forgotten. Just one of those things.

He had gone to his blind next to the lake between the moments when the wind died and the dawn began; a gray time. He put his camera onto the tripod, focused on the spot where he knew the deer would come to drink; trusted his instinct for the exposure settings. He wondered, but just for a moment, about what he was doing there. His fame, such as it was, came from photographs of the bizarre, the out of the ordinary. Photos which caught the moments people were too busy living through to see themselves; pictures framed to reflect pain. Now he was next to a mountain lake, cold and wet, waiting to capture a herd of drinking deer. He shook his head; he was

too old, now, to be taking dares, answering detractors. His was the only judgment that counted and this wasn't his vision. It was wrong, had nothing to do with the lives he knew. It bothered him, then, that he was so at ease in the blind, that there were things to be seen beyond what he saw. And then he slept and missed the dawn, but dreamed the dream that followed darkness, a dream he had seen before:

*It is sunrise.*

*The large, black bird rises gleaming from a pile of driftwood tumbled near the bend of a small river. It flies in a widening spiral over a land lush with grasses and game—buffalo and rabbits and deer—together under a clear blue sky and red sun. The river winds like a ribbon of fire. The only sounds are water and wind.*

*The bird caws.*

*With a powerful thrust of its wings, the raven circles, riding a thermal, and begins to fly back again. Beneath it, the plain is sere, littered with carcasses and bones. Nothing moves but the river and the bird in the sky. The sun falls behind the mountains to the west. The river winds like a trickle of blood.*

*The raven lights on the driftwood and caws. A herd of red-painted ponies thunders by its roost, eyes rolling in*

*panic*

*Then the only sound is the wind.  
The bird caws.*

The woman had traveled from Billings in the north to Beaumont in the south and now had come to this place and time, to the night of rain and wind on the edge of a mountain lake. It might have been an accident; it was with purpose, though, that she rose from her husband's side, saw the play of color in the sky, walked unseeing past David Malek's blind, removed her clothes and, taking a deep breath, dove from a rock into the icy embrace of the water.

David woke to the sound. Automatically, he released the shutter; then he looked out. Tendrils of mist whispered up out of the lake as if seeking purchase; finding none, they faded into the air. Small ripples played on the surface of the water, then disappeared. There were no deer, A-fish, he thought, jumping for a fly. A rock loosened and tumbling into the lake.

He turned the camera's motor drive on, and watched what was in front of him as if he were peering through the camera, framing each shot. His thumb played idly against the button on the cable release. The lake's stilling surface began to pulse, the tension preparing to break.





# DREAM

She rose from the water in a straight line, up gleaming, droplets of water prisms on her skin. She was facing him as she came up and then swam toward him. Even strokes, strong, as if she had been born to water. Vaguely, he heard the sound of the camera as frame after frame was exposed.

Her towel was thirty feet from where he hid and he watched as she dried herself, as she wrapped the towel about her and ran her fingers through her hair, short light brown shading to blond locks that began to curl. She stood at the edge of the lake then, and stretched; the lean lines of a dancer silhouetted against the blue of sky and water's gleam.

Dry and warmed, she dropped the towel and moved at the lake's edge. To her right, a buck peered out from the trees, watching, waiting to see if it would be safe to come to drink. She saw the deer and smiled, knowing that this place was his. She wrapped the towel around herself again, gathered her clothes, and walked away, passing the blind, passing David Malek, and humming to herself.

The photographer sat silently, still, and watched the herd moving. This is what he was here for, not naked sprites. The *chack* of the camera's moving mirror was loud in his ears. The buck lifted his head, sniffed the air, and went back to his drinking.

Now Malek's thoughts went to the woman, to the grace with which she moved, to the play of light on her body. And he wondered. Behind him, somewhere, he heard sounds carried on the still air. The deer turned and walked with dignity back into their woods.

Malek packed his equipment and began to walk toward the sounds he had heard. He smelled smoke and sausages cooking. He saw the woman, dressed and lounging against a tree while a tall, hard-edged man with white hair crouched by the fire. He was smoking a cigarette, and as he tended to the food, ash fell into skillet. The woman was looking directly at him, at David, as he walked into the clearing, and she smiled in greeting. Then her voice followed the smile: "Hello."

The man looked up, cold eyes assessing the intruder; they were questioning eyes, jealous, vengeful. David looked into them, through him, feeling ice and a vacuum and said, "Hi. Sorry to

disturb you. I was on my way back," he pointed into an undefined distance, "to my car." He held up his equipment case. "Just down at the lake, taking some pictures of the deer."

"They were beautiful, weren't they?" Her voice danced into his ears. She turned to the man, to her husband. "I saw them, too, when I went down to wash." She looked at David. "My name is Peg Wright. And this is my husband, Logan."

"David Malek." He paused, uncertain. She knew that he had seen her. Must know. He looked at her and found her within herself. He remembered the sound and feel of the wind in the night. "Well," he said, and started to walk away,

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*She rose from the water in a straight line, up gleaming, droplets of water prisms on her skin. She was facing him as she came up, and then swam toward him.*

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knowing that she would not let him go, remembering droplets prisms against her skin.

"No, wait. Why don't you join us. We have enough." David heard her voice coming from far away. He looked at her as she stood up, kicking at a stick that had been stuck in the ground at her side; she rubbed her right shoulder, just above the breast, and for a second filled with noise only he heard, he stood unable to move. "Please."

Logan Wright grunted.

They sat and talked and ate. Wright was quiet, watchful. A psychiatrist with a thriving practice in Beaumont, Texas and a collector: Black powder weapons, bronze miniatures, books, art. Peg had wanted to dance, but time had gotten away from her; now she was a social creature, fulfilling the demands her role as wife of Logan Wright presented. In the moments she could steal she sketched scenes of native American folklore and tradition. As David described what he thought he was trying to do on this shoot, Peg asked if he had sensed himself as an intruder at the lake's edge.

"No," he said, "Not intruding so much as mindful of my place, like it

wasn't mine but I could use it, you know? That buck knew I was there, and approved or something. If I can get that in the prints . . ." His voice trailed away and Peg nodded and looked away down the trail, toward the east.

Soon, food finished and conversation straining, David watched Peg watching the sky, saw her again rub her shoulder. He pushed himself up. "Thanks for everything, you guys. I think I'd better get going. Logan. Peg. So long."

He started walking along the path, passing Peg. She smiled at him. "I hope you got some nice pictures, David."

Yes, he thought, she knew. "Thanks. Listen," he turned so that he was facing both of them, "why don't you give me your address, and I'll send you a print. Who knows, you may start collecting me."

"How mu—" Wright started to say, but Peg interrupted him. "Thank you, David. That's very kind." She gave him their address and then, as he started to light a cigarette, she added, "If you cared about yourself, you wouldn't do that."

"I guess you're right." He put the match to the cigarette and took a drag, smiling sheepishly and shrugging. "See ya around, folks. And, oh, Logan, the print's on me. This time."

Wright smiled uncertainly, then waved.

He didn't wave three months later, though, when Malek met them for a second time. He had gone home to New Orleans and worked and studied the prints of the photographs he had taken next to the lake and realized that he didn't have to continue shooting with pain, but that he was comfortable with it. And then he learned of the convocation of black powder enthusiasts, the recreation of the old fur trappers' rendezvous. On the Mississippi, the whistle of the steamboat *Natchez* shrieked and echoed and sheet lightning played against the sky. In a bar on a corner of Bourbon Street, a stripper sighed.

Malek knew it was time to travel.

"David, how nice to see you again." Peg's voice was filled with joy, the words danced from her lips. "Logan, you remember David Malek, don't you?"

"Of course." David heard a mountain wind in Wright's voice. "I seem to remember you saying you were going to send us a copy of one of the pictures you took up at the lake. What happened, forget to load your camera?"

David smelled the beast protecting his lair. "As a matter of fact, I have them with me. Hi, Peg."

"What made you think we'd be here?" Wright's voice didn't dance, it at-

tacked, cracked. He looked at his wife, appraising her infidelities, seeing what was behind his eyes and not in front of them. She brought her hand to her neck, fondled the pink ribbon there; a small gold cross hung from it and sparkled in the hollow of her throat. She touched her shoulder.

"I didn't know. My agent told me you'd been in touch, though, that you're considering a couple of my portraits. And when I heard about this gathering, I just figured I'd take a chance that an enthusiast like you would be here. If you hadn't been, I'd have mailed them on to you.

"What do you think about the ones you've been looking at? Interested?"

Wright smiled for the first time. "Well, I'll tell you, they're different. I don't know that I'd want to display them, but as a psychiatrist, they certainly intrigue me. They look like some of the nightmares my patients describe. We'll see." He reached out and took the envelope David had given Peg from her hand. "Let's look at what we've got here."

There were three prints. Two showed the herd of deer at the edge of the lake, mist around their hooves, as if they were walking on clouds. The third was just the lake and a sky of blue clarity. The surface of the lake was rippled, as if a rock had loosened and tumbled into it. Peg looked at David and back at the last photograph, knowing just where her form was hidden by the water, willing herself to see. David touched the spot delicately, casually. "Like them?"

"David, they're beautiful. And so different. Do these look like your patients' nightmares, Logan?"

"No. No. Not at all. Why the change in style, Dave?"

"Like I told you, that was the purpose of the shoot. My work hasn't really changed, though."

His life had. Now, each moment took him further away and closer, as if he were leaving somewhere without going anywhere, finding something he hadn't known he had lost. He wandered through the crowds, camera always ready, and tried to imagine what the real convocations of trappers and Indians had been like, the sounds and smells that lived only in his mind. Focusing on a Creek grandmother sucking a piece of bitterroot, he looked over the camera and saw Peg sitting crosslegged on the other side of the woman, hand moving rapidly as she sketched the same scene from her angle.

And Wright hovered, David or Peg always in sight; perhaps in his sights during the pistol shooting event. On the final night of the rendezvous, there was a

dance—the prizes were going to be awarded there and Logan had won. And begun to lose: On the dance floor Peg moved gracefully in David's arms.

"David," she said, "did you happen to . . . ?"

"To what?"

"To get any pictures of me at the lake." Her grace fell in front of her discomfort.

"Yes." And that's all he said.

And though they spoke again, she asked no more about them.

Until a year later, when Malek had his first showing in Houston. They weren't on display, but on the afternoon of the opening, Peg came to the gallery



and he showed them to her, and shook his head when her eyes asked the question.

"They're mine. Alone." He put a cigarette in his mouth, but before he could light it, she took it from his lips.

"I told you," she said, "that if you—"

"—cared, I wouldn't do that. And if you cared . . ."

She broke the cigarette, dropping the pieces on the floor. "One of us has to." Then she left to go home and change her clothes. The Wrights were hosting a party in Malek's honor and celebrating Logan's latest acquisition—a stud farm.

That evening, with the sound of Logan's laughing suggestion in their ears, Peg gave David a tour of the ranch. They walked away from the lights and noise of the party and along the winding, gravel paths; soon the glow of the strung lanterns was behind them, the music and conversation buzz swallowed by a Gulf wind.

In the deeper darkness of the stable's shadow, David put his hand on Peg's shoulder, turning her gently toward him. She looked up at him, stepped backward, and placed a hand lightly on his cheek.

Like dancers following a well-

rehearsed choreography they turned, staying face-to-face, waiting for the next beat. David reached out to her, his hands falling gently onto her arms "Peg, I . . ."

"I know, David." She moved into his embrace, accepted his kiss on her forehead, found his lips with hers for a moment. Then, tenderly, she stepped away from him, from the shadows.

"David, no more." Her hand stayed on his chest. "Please."

He thought of the way she looked in the photographs he had, of the innocence of her every movement, and nodded. Without speaking, they walked back to the party.

But a sharing developed between them. Sometimes, in the seasons that followed that night, they would touch. But not often.

**T**he raven calls.

Dark clouds scud, pushed by howling winds. A warrior alights from his pony next to a painted lodge. The hunting has been neither good nor bad; there are enough rabbits on the string to feed the man and his wife for several days.

He raises the flap and goes into the lodge where his wife is painting a robe with geometric patterns. A large cross, sign of the morning star, dominates the back and repeats along the edges. This will be hers; his robe—as befits a man—has scenes of the hunt and of a battle.

The raven circles the lodges of the People, as if shepherding the men into one place with the warrior's lodge at its center. When the pale sun sets, and the bird finds its evening roost, the young men come into the lodge. Their talk, heard by the wind and the raven, is of movement.

Then one evening, David said, "There's something I have to do. It means I'll have to go away for a while, maybe four months."

"An assignment? What is it?" There was excitement in Peg's tone, a shared pride in his accomplishments. They talked about their work often, of his growing reputation, of the contracts she was getting from publishers to produce cover art for their books. Her illustrations captured the moments she was born too late to live through.

"No . . . well, I'll probably do some shooting. But this is something else. A surprise."

Peg laughed. "I love surprises. When can I know?" She spun around the room, her skirt flaring.

"Soon enough. Now, come, kiss me good-bye."

(continued on page 64)



# AS IF BLOODIED ON A HUNT BEFORE SLEEP

*In the stalking season, his heart was  
touched by the hunter's madness.*

by Craig Kee Strete

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT WISNEWSKI

**T**he white man fancied himself a hunter of animals and men. For the animals, he carried a gun, for men he carried a college education that designated him an anthropologist.

He sat in Wolf Walker's lodge and told tales of hunting. He was establishing rapport. It was a form of barter. He told stories calculated to establish kinship. In exchange, he expected to collect anthropological hunting trophies, perhaps unrecorded legends or creation myths or simply details of Indian life as it once was lived.

He felt as much for his prey, human or animal, as any white hunter felt.

Wolf Walker was a rich man in an Indian way. He had deep knowledge of the coming from of his people. He saw much with the eyes of a shaman and it was said he could see deeper into the night than any night stalker.

He was poor in the white way and would not have eaten so well or so fully if the white man had not been there to provide the meal.

The old man chewed on a chicken bone and seemed to follow the anthropologist's story with interest.

The white man relived the attacks and combats between himself and the animals he had killed, raising his arms and acting out the parts of both hunter and hunted.

The old man ate and listened gravely. The story was punctuated by an occasional cracking sound as Walking Wolf bit down on the bones, grinding them between his teeth.

He liked the taste of the bones almost as much as he liked the meat. He thanked the Great Spirit he still had strong teeth to break bones.

When the white man's story was finished, Walking Wolf wiped his hands on a piece of torn buckskin.

The white man had a way of making his stories exciting, but wisely, his stories seldom made him out as the hero. More often than not, the animals he hunted emerged victorious in his stories. He talked of the too-clever animals that got away.

The anthropologist knew that this would tend to make him seem more sympathetic.

"I eat your food and it is good because in the days that now come to me, I am often hungry," said Walking





# BLOODIED

Wolf. "Your manner of speaking is pleasant and the telling of the tales is skillful and good-eared. They are lies. These are but lies you wish to exchange for my good will. I do not mind. It does not trouble me. Now I will pay you for the food."

The white man shifted uncomfortably on his hard wooden chair.

"Answer me this, white man, do you think it possible that a wolf could bite a man's arm hard enough to tear his heart out?"

"It doesn't seem likely. Knowing what I know about human bodies, the arm might come off, but no, the heart ripped out, impossible I would say."

"Then I shall tell you a story that will show that you are wrong. I do not mind telling a story that proves a white man wrong. This story I tell you is a hunting story and you seem to like hunting stories. There is much that is strange in this story. In the darkness of my old age, the thunder of this story still makes utterance to me and so it comes forth."

The white man, as unobrusively as possible, got a notebook and pen out and laid them on his lap.

"As you have hunted and other white men have hunted in this valley for a living, there were two brothers, men of our people, who hunted more than all of you. They hunted on the dim paths of night.

"They rose up in the morning of their manhood and hunted and loved nothing else, talked only of this and lived as such shadowless souls, living their waking lives for only this. Do you know of such great passion, white man, this great fever whose tongue is the wind's tongue? This fever that I too have known." The old man's voice shook with emotion.

The old man touched his chest with a closed fist. "Yes, the great war wind of the chase sat in my chest and I made the trails of the hunted shake with my passing. So it was once, but no more.

"And even as my heart was full of the hunter's madness the younger of the two brothers in all forms of his faces, all terrible in the light of other days, in all the works of his killing hands, he had the greater wind at his back. No, not a wind, a great storm,

and his madness was a great shield.

"When first he arose, younger brother shook off the bonds of night and took on the chains of the hunt, his steps sought the wild ones and violence was his first waking thought. Each morning began with the death of a forest creature and each day ended with the quick snap of stalking death."

"I have met men like that," said the white man, quietly.

"No. Such men are gone from the world, and gone before your time and gone in my time. I do not hunt. Listen and you shall see," said Walking Wolf, and there was almost anger in his face.

"Now these two brothers I speak

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*The white man shifted on his chair. "Answer me this," said Walking Wolf. "Do you think that a wolf could bite a man's arm enough to tear his heart out?"*

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of were as wild as the forgotten things in the unsearchable places of the time-stricken lands. In youth, they walked large as trees, and the blood was quick in them and swift running. They had great night-seeing eyes. And they cried the great hunting cry which comes deep-rooted in the heart like worms bred in the black bark of the tree of all trees."

The white man wrote quickly in his notebook, his hand dancing to capture each and every word.

"It was to kill that a flower bloomed within them. No woman was embraced, when death was the woman in their arms. They worshipped blood and breathed the fragrance of its long red hair." Walking Wolf looked to the four directions, reading the winds of memory and his body shook with the passing of the wind. His face was a fire, all death and all life, and his body shook again like a nation in ruin.

The white man looked up and saw the spasm seize the old man and stayed the pen in his hand, fearful that the old man would drop dead of a heart attack. But the old man calmed himself.

"In the winter of the great cold, when the stormshaker roared in the world, the great wolves became ferocious. They came down out of their lairs and roamed around our lodges and howled until even the Great Spirit trembled. They fell upon us and no person was safe from them outside his lodge. We lost children to them, we lost women to them and warriors, for their hunger was unslakable and they had lost their fear of man and our arrow-tipped death in that terrible winter."

"1846," said the white man, noting the year, unaware that he had spoken aloud, for he had his own way of counting time.

"But the two brothers did not stay inside their lodges, no, for they hunted the hunters and had great joy in even more dangerous lifetaking. Many wolves fell to their arrows and spears. And sometimes, in his blood lust, the younger brother would fall upon a wolf with only his knife, for he sought always the greater madness.

"Then it came to be known that a great wolf, which had killed our children and torn the leg from a woman, was upon us. Our anguish rose and our spirits gazed dumbly upon this great beast. They say his hot breath, foul and sweet as the grave, came into the very lodges and made the home fires weak. A great warrior sought his death and left us, and returned no more, for his blood was upon the snow and the stars spelled death.

"But the two brothers were greatly uplifted in their hearts for this was the great hunt they sought. Where fear closed the hearts of our people, they longed to walk. They set themselves on the trail of this great wolf, and nothing else in life.

"But he, the great wolf, was a ghost dancer in the scalp house. They killed two wolves, but not the great one. And each night, they brought their kills back to the lodges and found a tale of some new death the great wolf had brought. Always it happened in a place where they had not been, for he eluded them like the windigo women who lure young men into the woods to steal their bones.

"So it went, and the storm shaker would not relent and the brothers traveled farther and farther each day from their lodges and got no closer to the wolf than an arrow gets when shot at the blood-red moon.

"So it went, and all the dark night ways and hunting chants were no good against the beast. The two



brothers became one great burning heart, like a many-rooted tree that swelled with hate toward the sky. In their anger came great strength, and the people of their own blood began to fear them, as they feared the great wolf. For the people looked into their eyes and saw the thing that burned in thy eyes of that which they sought.

"When they had been two days gone from their lodges, following a wolf track that seemed promising, the elder brother said, 'I shall sing my death song if my knife does not soon find the heart of this beast.'

"The younger brother had already painted his face for death. 'I will kill him with teeth and bare hands or leave my bones on the burial rack.'

"So their hearts were set for death," said the old man.

The white man stirred uncomfortably in his chair but his hand continued to move across the paper, chasing the words.

"But the great wolf was not at the end of their trail," the old man continued. "And so they came back in despair to their lodge and found that the great wolf had been there. They found their aged father, ripped and half-eaten by the great wolf. It had come into their lodge and profaned it and severed the great living root of their lives." A tear formed in the corner of Walking Wolf's eyes and he seemed to shrink in his chair, suddenly old as if his twilight had come upon him.

Again the white man stopped writing and was afraid the old man would do some injury to himself.

"Perhaps we should rest for a while," said the white man. "Your throat must be dry and my hand could use a rest too."

The old man did not seem to hear him. Walking Wolf stared at something, at a road that went backward and the white man was not on that road.

"The two brothers buried the body of their father," he said. "They took his torn and claw-ripped heart and burned it and gave it to Sky Grandfather, for the great wolf had burned their hearts and their home on earth was now ashes and dust.

"The people of the village saw them at their task and grew frightened. The brothers were more demon than flesh now, sucklings of the great wolf that none could kill, and the people hid their faces for the brothers were no longer good to look upon.

"And the brothers fired their lodge for they lived now only in the hoped-

for corpse of the great wolf. His ribs were now their lodgepole. They set out after him, hot now upon his trail, red with the blood of their father."

The white man wrote furiously for now the words came faster and the old man was in some kind of fever himself and could not be stopped.

"As they chased him, day chased night and caught it but the great wolf was in the next day. The trail was seared with the fever of their passing. The shaper of thunders would have hid from them, if he had seen their faces. On they ran, and the next day fell to the thunder of their feet and the straining of their lungs and the ache in



their hearts, but the great wolf was always in the next night, or so it seemed.

"And then, at the edge of the night, when their hearts were about to burst, a great fear rattled in their chests and darkness took hold of them with icy hands.

"The younger brother said, 'Our strength is going and the beast mocks us.'

"The Elder brother said, 'We hunt a demon, smarter than men. We are dead men already and he has not yet given us our death. As we would give it to him.'

"The moon came up and ahead of them, on the trail, sat the great wolf, waiting for them. And the younger brother looked at the moon and said, 'The sun is blinding me. It steals the sleep from my eyes and hides it in a spider's web.'

"His hands uncured and became claws, making killing motions.

"And the fear of madness and the fear of the wolf were mixed in the heart of the elder brother, and his weapons were ashes and dust, and his hands would have made the sign for

peace but he had never learned it. He made a fist of his hands and found the ashes of his father's burned heart in it, and so mocked, the fear ran from him and the old hunger was new born.

"The elder brother would have moved then but he saw something the younger brother could not see. The death of all deaths in the moon glow and a moon shadow crept over him and froze him like a dead tree. And he could not move.

"But younger brother saw only a mad dawn and burned in the blazing sun, soul destroyed.

"Younger brother ran toward the wolf and the wolf sat like a golden fire, all tangled and scorched with the worms of death.

"And they met and locked in great combat, the wolf ripping and clawing and the younger brother, a ravaging wind mad with hunting lust, stabbing for the heart of the terrible one.

"Long did they struggle and the blood was a river.

"Out of that river flowed the life of the younger brother. The great wolf seized him by the face, the black jaws came together and the skull was crushed. Younger brother dropped to the ground under the weight of his death and the wolf moved back, ran away howling with fierce wild joy. It stopped upon the path and waited for the sun to rise in the heart of the elder brother."

The white man was covered with sweat, writing furiously, his shoulders hunched forward over the notebook. His arm ached and his fingers were a searing, fierce pain.

Walking Wolf was bent like a man facing a great wind. His eyes burned like two knife wounds and his face was contorted like a man in the grip of something dark.

"And so I," said Walking Wolf, "the elder brother, on legs that felt like betraying me, moved forward then. I took tiny steps like a child, like a deer child first walking toward newborn milk. The trees seemed to touch me with icy clawed hands and something was in me, a stain on my heart. Was it fear that ripped me? Was that knife in me now, that had never feared, that had painted my face for death?

"I stood in the blood of my dead brother, and the trail of the great wolf seemed cold and lifeless before me. The wolf awaited my coming but I did not come. I knelt beside the slain one and took his lifeless body and held it against me. Death of the hunted, that had always been my strength, but it

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# VILCABAMBA

*At the mountain's top, they say,  
the old ones still dwell in gold.*

by Carol Emshwiller

ILLUSTRATION BY PETER VINCE

**S**ome kind of rain—some soft kind of rain first. Then the prickle of imagination or remembering, I'm never sure which. Another mist almost like this one, though, and tunes of old songs I wonder if I'll ever hear again or if I really heard before. A different language. *Guaya gocomadi. Guaya go' comaditu.* What does it mean? And there is a sign: the hand palm up, then turning over and back again, and repeated. A graceful gesture. I remember, too, a funny little backward step dance. And whistles! Each child had both a name and a whistle to be called by, and the whistles echoed sharp and clear about the mountains. I've forgotten my special whistle but I think I remember my name. I was Akuhu. And I think I remember they told me I was Ipa. "You are Ipa," they said. "Ipa! You will marry Ipa and no other. There will be no children, and there never have been children, unless Ipa marries Ipa." (I think not all of us, even there, were Ipa.)

It turned out to be true: there are

no children. I married one of these women. She left me for one of her own kind and now she does have a child. If I do not find Ipa, I fear I will be childless. But are there any Ipa—and what is Ipa?

I do remember they said Ipa had dogs that came from the wombs of pumas, Ipa had cats from eagles' aeries. I remember this, but I forgot the language I learned it in.

Here they call me Mac, though some call me Joe. Also Big Nose, Nosey, Nose it All, Slanty Head.... Sometimes it seems they took me only to laugh at me. (They had, by then, and as a favor, cut off my two sixth fingers.) I imagine all of us looked more or less like me back in that place, and I think that the burden of proof of my ugliness is on them. I think I remember Mother, or perhaps big sister.... Yes, a sister: Woialala. I rode on her back sometimes... rode in a little yellow sling with tassels. I remember her... I do remember her because it's her face I began to see in the mirror, more and more, as I grew

older. My nose, her nose. My black eyes, her black eyes. My long, strong fingers, hers. When I think of her, I think this is a good way to be looking.

They took me from the food I knew and loved and fed me small pickled fish, onions, sour cheeses. I remember the first crab I ate. There was nothing else to eat, so I ate it. (We are mountain people. Such food is alien to us.) They never let me do any work that I wanted or felt suited for. First I was set to polishing their shoes. Later to polishing their vehicles. I polished silver, brass and bronze, glass, glasses, doorknobs....

Always they tell me my people are gone. Even the kindly ones tell me I have no more people, our land a broken wilderness: bridges, roads, and terraces, fallen into the valleys. All now impenetrable. Also I know it's not a trip to take alone, but I have nothing to lose, and I would be happy if I found even one person like me, or one a little like me, or one like Woialala. I want to die in that place, somewhere near the terraces and tarns





# VILCABAMBA

of home even if in ruins. But it's been so long I wonder if it will seem like home anymore?

I have a box of things I came with—what I had on when they took me: a sort of vest of stained white cotton with a border of red and gold threads. Much too small for me now, of course. I've often wondered if the stains are blood. They're the right brown color. I don't think it's my blood, but I don't remember whose it could be. I don't know who was hurt or maybe even killed when I was taken. Perhaps I don't want to remember. There's a snake skin belt with no buckle. I think they took the buckle. There's a red wool hat. *That* still fits. I remember clinging to these even after they'd dressed me in their clothes. It was as though something of mother, aunt, or sister might be in them. They saw how the things comforted me and they gave me a box and let me keep them.

*Kopi, kopi,  
Bra ta apu.  
Kopi, kopi,  
Bra ta pu.  
Kopi, kopi,  
Rintu kopi,  
Bruha tapu,  
Tatapu.*

Children said that. Over and over.

**A** *ma, sua, ama llulla, ama quella.* I do not steal (*sua*), but I have stolen I do not lie (*llulla*) but I have lied—already five lies. Or, rather, the same lie to five different people. What I have stolen is only the exact fare and not one penny more, but it is stealing none the less, and even though I, myself, could be said to be stolen goods. Can't I steal, then, in order to restore myself to myself and to the place where I was stolen from? But I learned something in that place and I know I left my golden bracelet on the edge of a cliff and would come back and find it there. Though perhaps I only dreamed this and that once I had a golden bracelet.

My heart is a stone. (An idea I think I learned in that place: Golden heart, silver heart, a heart to reach the top of the mountain, a heart to go on

a long journey.) I cried after they first took me. I have not cried since. I looked for love after they first took me, I have not looked since, nor believed in it, not even in my marriage. "Go," I said to Lillian. "You haven't broken your word for there was only a stone to make promises to." My trip, then, not only to find my people and Ipa, but to make my heart the navel, the *cuzco* of my being, where all directions merge.

**N**ow the happy dawn of the first steps into the desert of the coast. Leave behind the ocean foods. In my pack, corn and dried potatoes, nuts

*Always they tell  
me my people are  
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directions merge.*

and fruits. Also my little red and gold trimmed vest and my snake belt. Only now, three hour's hike in to this damp desert, have I dared to take out my red hat and put it on. It's a funny little hat with fringe along the edges. It must have been loose and rather like a beret when I wore it as a child, but now it fits more like a low fez. In the center of the front I think I once had a golden ornament—must have been real gold because that was torn from it when I was first taken. Now there's a ragged hole there. I've not tried to repair it. I've left it as it was. A hat with a hole. I would like my heart, one day, to be as open as my hat.

For the first time in my life—that I can remember—I'm full of hope and eagerness. I don't care if I find my own mountain. I have come here to be in that brisk air. I have come here to taste the little round seeds of home. I have come here to see, if not big noses, then at least the groups—the *majorities* in fact! of small, brown people.

But of course I've seen them already, when I first landed. People, not exactly like me, but rather like me. Some almost as small and some hawk

noses. But a strange thing happened. I tried to come close to them to see if I remembered anything of their language, but they turned their backs and whispered. They covered their mouths with their hands or their hats and stopped talking. They looked in some other direction or kept their eyes on the ground. I thought I heard one of them whisper "*Nawpa runa*" and I remembered—or thought I did—that *Nawpa* meant old and *runa* meant person, but I am not old. That they turned away worried me, but not much because I have little to do with these people of the hot lowland cities here on the coast. Also I'm used to being looked at as the stranger. I'm used to the hand that covers the mouth, though of course I'd hoped that here, at least, that would stop.

At this early part of my journey I feel I should avoid the roads, stick to paths. I cross the edges of banana plantations. The people I see all do as the ones in town did, whisper, turn away.... I keep to a more or less straight course. Not hard since I can see my goal: the heights in the East, snow on the tops of some of the peaks. The ground is flat here, so I walk as fast as I can. I don't stop to rest. Even at noon, I don't look for a shady spot. I nibble parched corn and sip chicha as I walk. By late afternoon I come, already, to the cliffs. I look for seldom-used trails. I want to sleep at least part way up, out of this heavy air and away from these people who seem less like my people, even, than those others, my captors, though they look more like me. I wonder if, the closer I get to my own, the less comfortable I'll feel?

At the head of one trail a serpent is sunning itself. Large and beautiful. A series of diamonds, yellow, tan, white, black.... It comes into my mind that this is Serpent-Ipa. Ipa-Serpent. Fully fledged birds fly out of its eggs. If a snake should lead the way, then so be it, I will be led, especially by this prince of snakes. Yes, I think.... No, I think, no. I tell myself I am no longer superstitious. All very well, but how else shall I pick the trail? I move forward. The snake coils off his rock. "*Ama sua, ama llulla, ama quella,*" I say to it, and, "*Guaya Comaditu.*"

The snake looks at me with its little eyes, making me realize I have not been looked at since I came except by this prince. We stare at each other and then he moves aside to let me pass. I do.

I manage to climb out of the

damp heat before dark, so I sleep where I can breathe and where I can see the stars, clear and close.

Before I left the town, I had bought, not only food with the last of my money, but a poncho such as these people wear and a heavy sweater. I had thought perhaps then I wouldn't be looked at as the stranger ... the peculiar stranger anymore. I'm wearing these as I reach the top of the cliffs the next day and see before me the grassy plain with the mountains ... my snow-touched mountains beyond it. I see three clusters of little thatched houses and not far off—perhaps a mile or so from me—I see a group of farmers planting in the old fashioned way, six or seven pairs of them, each man with his digging stick and each woman leaning towards the man and laying in the seeds.

I'm thinking that these people of the high plain will be more like my people, and now that I'm dressed more like they are, they'll see I'm one of them even if I can't speak as they do.

But first I rest a bit after my climb, my lungs ... even my heart, opening. I will greet them, palms up. I angle toward their hill. They're singing a planting song and they're working so hard they don't see me. I hold out my hands. "*Ama sua, ama llulla...*" I begin the greeting, but they're running off before I finish it. It seems they hardly have a chance to look at me and they're running away. In the distance dogs bark.

"*Per que? Pour quoi?*" I shout and, "*Imatataq?*" but they're already into the valley beyond the hill. I'm upset and yet elated. I have remembered, *Imatataq*. It popped out in the right place. And I know I will remember more. But why did they run?

And now almost the same thing has happened again; I've crossed the high plain and here behind rolling hills, I see another village. I think to ask for shelter for the nights up here are cold. Also for something to eat if they'll share with me. At the nearest house I see an old man in a yard behind a low, stone fence. He is threading red wool tassels into the ears of a llama. When he sees me he's so startled he pulls on the tassels and frightens the beast. It jumps the low wall and runs off in front of me while the old man hides in his hut squawking out, "*Nawpa runa. Nawpa auqui.*"

"*Per que? Por que?*" (Which is right?) But then I shout, "*Imatataq,*" as though it were a curse. And then yet another "why" comes to me: *kotpo*. What language is that? Is there yet

another language I used to know? *Guaya go cocomaditu? Kotpo?*

Away, then, from the people of the high plains. These are not my people. I will walk all night or at least as long as the moon shines. I will get into the heights as fast as I can.

Have good heart, I tell myself. Even my captors said "Take heart," and "Don't lose heart." Walking keeps my courage up. (Now there's another word of hearts. *Coeur*. I will keep my *coeurage*.) "*Auqui?*" Didn't that mean prince? Or was it magic mountain spirit?

They told me my people were gone. Is that why these people treat



me as though I am a ghost? Or am I so very different? But, yes, perhaps I am, for what I haven't let myself think about, nor do I ever let myself think about it, is that I had been put to the board as a baby. I have a head like no other head that I have ever seen except—and even these are rare—in drawings and on statues.

Sometime after midnight I lie down, flat out on the plain, sheltered by nothing. The moon has set. I look up at the stars (I look from under my flat, slanting brow. I must admit it.) I watch them until I fall asleep, dreaming fires on the hillside. These are my fires. I have set every single one but I don't know if they are the fires of rage or fires of celebration. Then I dream falling and landing here on this plane as if from a great height, and wake as the sun is coming up over Vilcabamba and begins to warm me.

How can I stay angry, how can I be discouraged, on such a bright morning, my lungs expanding? my chest, I can feel it, becoming a chest like the chests of my people? And it's always been a chest like this, but never, till now, had a chance to

breathe to its full capacity. Sky bright. Air thin. Morning. Sun. And my singing heart has remembered another old tune. I will go, singing it.

And now I come upon the royal road. Here it's forty feet wide and still well used. I'm passed by mountain people coming down to get corn because they can't grow it up where they live. Again, these people don't look at me or speak when they pass. They hurry by even though I lean over as though weighted down by my pack though it's not that heavy. But I lean over more than I need to. I remember that is the polite way. It says, "I am burdened. I am like a beast of burden." I keep my eyes on the mountains or on my feet. I never look at anyone passing.

The road is well kept up. I cross a wonderful, swaying bridge. Armies crossed on bridges just like this, six or eight men abreast. But they told me this would end, as I near my jungle home, the roads would not be left, and that's true. As I turn away toward my own land, the road dies. One needs a machete to chop one's way along it. I don't follow it. I strike straight out—no reason not to—into the "eye-teeth," the "tusks" of the world. Now I cling to the slopes with fingernails and toes and maybe sleep half standing up or wedged into some cleft. No way to go but up or down or crabbing along crosswise, but soon I find trails, hidden trails. I follow them, but each trail rises up out of the jungle and then ends suddenly with a drop-off as though these were all dummy trails to fool the enemy. I try again and again, always with the same results. Three days of it. Now four. I have walked all day sometimes and then retraced my steps to try some other branch and to sleep huddled on the trail. I see no one. I go nowhere, but I'm being watched. Bird calls come too clear in places where no bird seems to be. Pebbles come down on me. At first I didn't think they had been thrown on purpose, but now I think they are. Sometimes they come from a great height, many small stones that sting. Three times a boulder has come down just behind me. Purposely missing, that's clear. A warning, perhaps, but I keep on trying. Now, at the end of the fourth day, I come to yet another drop-off. No sign of a path along the far cliff. Nothing to dare to leap for. Why? Why so many false trails and not one single one of them a real trail? This one has a stepping stone at the end as though to

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# THE BRIDGE

*For every man there comes a time to  
walk the path of shadows.*

by Thomas E. Sanders  
(Nippawanock)

ILLUSTRATION BY SERGIO CUAN

**L**ike one who has researched the literature of despair and found that which best speaks a private agony, Margin Muck doubted. In his seventy-nine years, he had found no absolute to trust, no certain knowledge to minimize the mental bursitis that, like a cyst on his spirit, ached and throbbed until he cried soundlessly into his pillow in the hour before hearth heating. Sometimes he could almost see a dim shape standing near his bed. He knew it was death. We are born knowing it will arrive.

When stirrings and muffled sounds progressed into bacon and coffee odors, he told himself, "Enough," went into the bathroom to wash away the pain and replace it with the laconic expression he put on with the fine film of talcum powder that protected his old skin from the Florida sun. Then, squaring his shoulders as much as his old body would allow, he went into the kitchen and took his place at the table. After all these years it still seemed strange to sit at a square object to indulge in the rituals of food. Nourishment ripples out endlessly; circles originate in circles and flow into their origins. How can that happen at a square table?

Some things will be known only when we rejoin The Mystery. That truism had always served to remove bothersome questions. It was, like

eating, a ritual necessary to life in the body. He recited it to himself and greeted Simone. "Good morning, Daughter."

"Did you sleep well, Uncle?" she asked, her black eyes projecting assurance the question was not ritual. She hoped he had; she was a good niece. She was a good mother.

"Umm." The interpretable laconic response allowed Muck to be truthful without reciting the irritating litany of the aged.

Simone, no doubt grateful to be spared information she could do nothing about, said, "Sometimes the night gets long, the bed gets hard. Walking about wouldn't wake the kids, and Gabe and I sleep through everything. . . ."

"I've heard restlessness," Muck said. "Something moves in the house at night on frightened feet."

She had not quite mastered the laconic look, but women are born understanding restraint. "It's Ihasha."

"Umm." The first-born nephew, the eldest of the three children named for extinct peoples.

"They're hasseling him at school."  
"Umm."

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# THE BRIDGE

"They said, 'You can't come into our restroom; you're a girl.'"

Cupping his hands around the coffee mug she placed before him, Muck said, "His braids."

"Yes."

Sometimes it would be better if circles did not flow into their origins; but, then, nature doesn't discriminate. Patterns are as constant as good and evil making up the whole. He remembered the teachers at the school when he was a boy: "Girls wear their hair long and braided." And they held the boys, arms pinned at their sides, and cut the braids close to the scalps. Muck had learned that day to hurt in silence, to show no pain. He pulled a mind robe over the back of his eyes, cutting out the light, reflecting it so the teachers could not see into his hate. That night he read from "Judges" in their book and, thereafter, thought of them as "the Philistines." There were no pillars to pull down when his hair had grown out again, but, from that time, he saw things in the mind robe darkness he learned to control.

On laughter as warming as the sun, Gabe and the children flowed into the kitchen.

"Uncle," Gabe said, taking his seat as the children lined up before Muck in order of age and waited for his greeting.

"Your coffee gives strength today, White Deer. I thank you for its warmth." He looked into his nephew's eyes so Gabe could see truth in the orison.

"I thank you, Uncle, for the strength and warmth you give the children." White Deer was a good father, a good nephew.

That ritual over, Calusa released her impatient little brother who clambered onto Muck's lap and, hugging the old man as tightly as his chubby arms would allow, bubbled, "Unka, Unka, Unka," with the exuberance of the young animal that has not yet learned fear of rebuff.

When this one's time came, he would handle his schoolmates differently from Ihasha. The two-year-old Carises was moon faced and moon eyed, but latent muscles as restless as he to overpower life rippled beneath the baby fat. "Oh, little buffalo," Muck

said, his hand cradling Carises's head, "you are a flower-fed calf now, but one day you will be a bull ready for battle. The NFL will fight for you."

Simone moved to Muck's side and, grunting gently for Carises was as heavy as he looked, lifted and transferred him to his highchair.

Calusa stepped in and, placing both of her hands on Muck's forearm, looked up, smiling. With the quiet beauty of generations of Ojibwas, she was like elegant beadwork turned out by her mother's hands. "You are a lovely memory to a mighty people," Muck said to her. "Happy will be the children born of such a mother."

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*"I dreamed of you, Uncle," Ihasha said, his eyes troubled.*

*"I was in a great wind. I was afraid. But you were the wind and I was not afraid any more."*

---

Calusa continued smiling as she relinquished his arm. Her clear eyes and delicate skin would have required much paint for protection from the sun in an earlier age. Muck smiled every time he looked at her and thought of the beautiful Moon Flower he had hoped to marry when he was a young man in the Black Hills. He had not been able to give her father the price she set on herself, and, true to the old ways, she had chosen a Pend d'Oreille who gave him a Model T truck. Tradition can sometimes be, as the Pharisees say, a pain the ass.

Finally, Ihasha came forward hesitantly. Always shy, always reserved, his Onondaga ancestors looked out of his eyes, Gabe's determination stiffened his backbone. In an earlier time he might have been Hyanwatha, for language came from his mouth like birds in flight, dipping and darting and seeking places to light that would best bear their weight.

"I dreamed of you, Uncle," he said, his eyes troubled.

Muck felt his bones compress, prepare to defend themselves against whatever revelation his visionary

young nephew would reveal.

"Umm," he said.

"I was in a great wind. I was afraid. But you were the wind and I was not afraid any more." He fell silent, his eight-year-old face a pictograph of expectation.

Something Muck had known a certainty ago trembled at the edge of vision and was gone. A coldness no coffee could conquer possessed him. "That will require thinking. When you come from school we will sit under the date palm and talk of this."

Ihasha had not finished. He looked toward the rear of the house, toward the Gulf that ate at the shore a mile away. "I was drowning in water, but the water was you, and I breathed it all right." Again he looked expectant.

Muck closed his eyes and leaned back in his chair. He willed his bones to relax, to untangle themselves from the knots they were forming. When he opened his eyes, silence heavy as a Pendleton blanket made the room uncomfortably warm.

"This will require much thinking, my son. You think on it at school. I will think on it here. We will consider it together when you come home."

As Ihasha turned away, he said, "Umm." He was an exceeding bright boy.

Simone moved quietly between the stove and the table. Her face was clouded. Twice she narrowed her eyes and bobbed her head urging Gabe to speak. When he refused to meet her eyes, she poured herself coffee and sat tentatively on the edge of her chair. Muck waited for her to speak, but Gabe broke the silence at last. "We had thought Ihasha might stay home from school today, Muck," he said. "Simone is going to speak to the principal..."

"I don't want to stay home," Ihasha said softly. "I can handle it, Dad."

"I'm sure you can, Ihasha," Gabe said. "We just want to help. Your classmates have no right to ask about your religion..."

Muck was so surprised that he spoke without invitation. "They ask about your religion? What do they ask?" The Pharisees had always told him far more than they knew about their own religion, had never asked him anything about his.

"They don't ask me about my religion," Ihasha said quietly. "They ask me if I believe in God."

"Umm."

*(continued on page 72)*

# FILM PREVIEW

# SPACEBALLS



Scenes from Mel Brooks's satiric sf saga. Top: Ditzzy droid Dot Matrix (Lorene Yarnell) is captured by the devilish Dinks. Below left: Princess Vespa of Druidia (Daphne Zuniga) escapes with space jockey Lone Starr (Bill Pullman) and his Mawg mascot Barf (John Candy). Below right: Brooks as the unscrupulous President Scroob of the planet Spaceballs.



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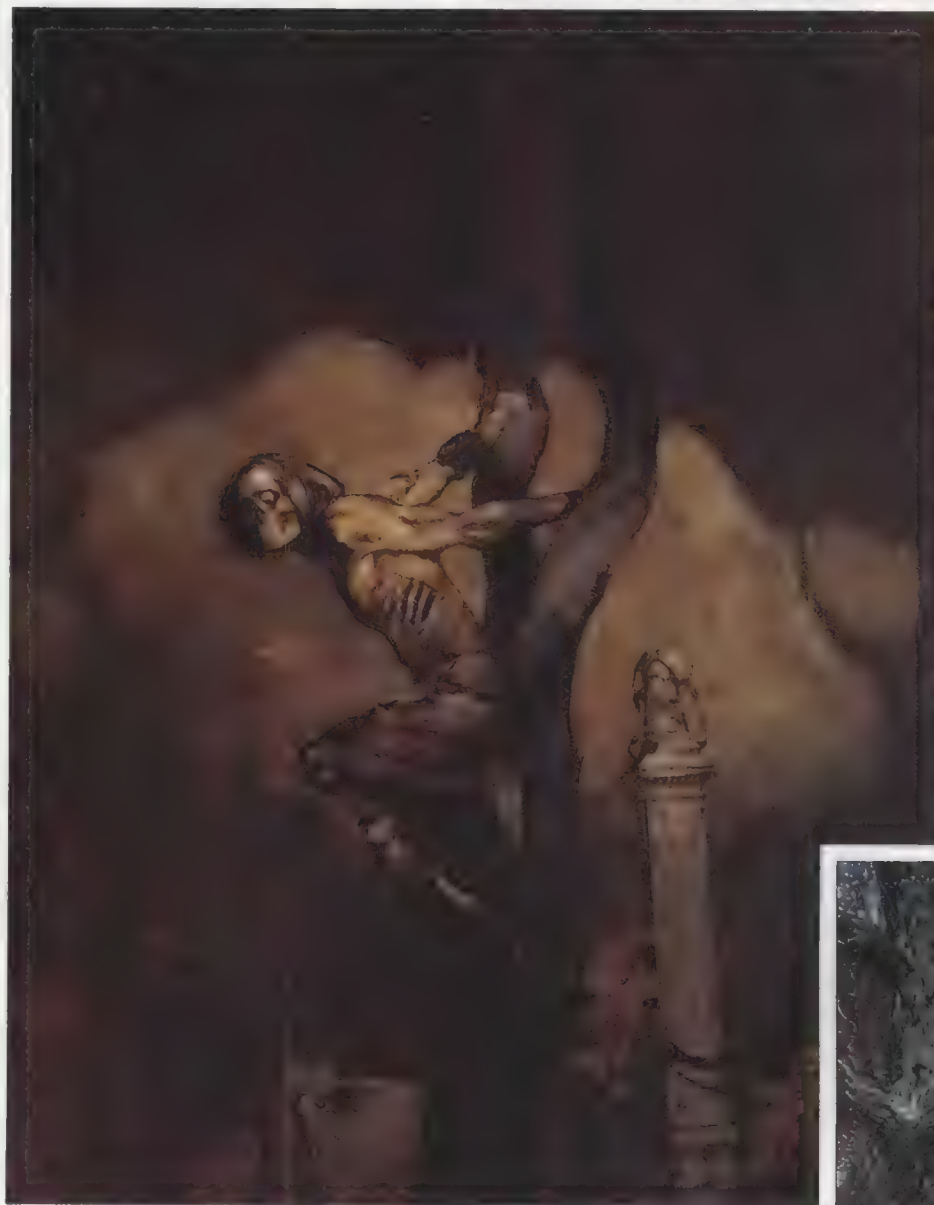
THE TWILIGHT ZONE GALLERY

# THE ART OF J E F F R E Y



J O N E S

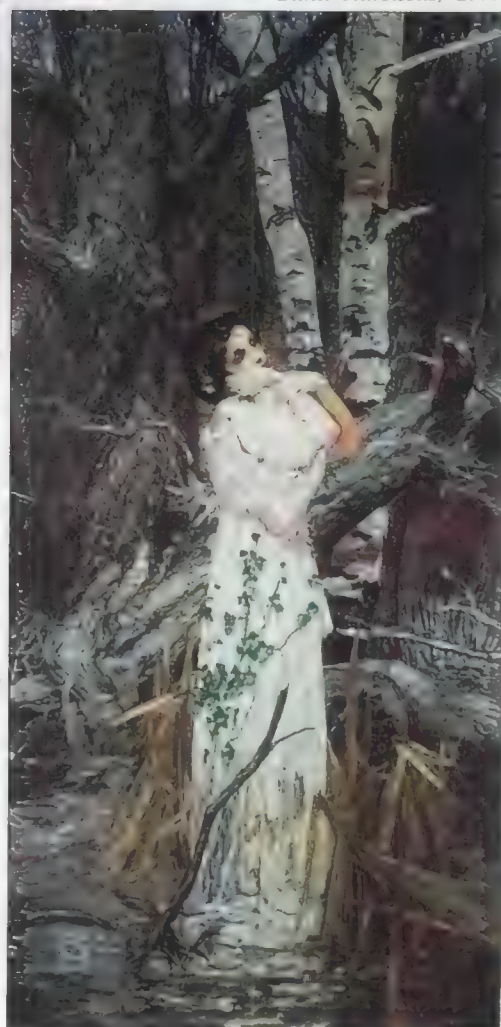
*The Black Rose, 1971*



Detail from *Idyl*, 1979

*At Night*, 1974

*Blind Narcissus*, 1977

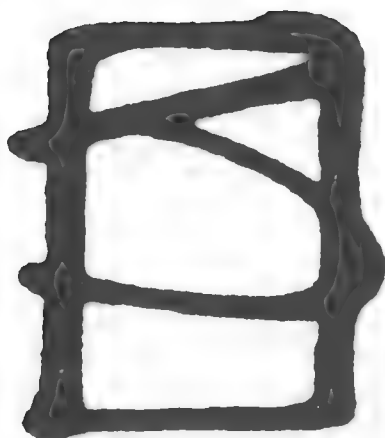


**D**urability is one of the qualities any serious artist seeks—to reach into the mind of the viewer with images that remain sharp and moving; to linger, lovingly, long after any particular external image is gone.

This trait is intrinsic to the work of Jeffrey Jones. It informed *Idyl*, the fantasy strip that became the first thread in the developing tapestry of Jones's reputation. First published in *National Lampoon*, *Idyl* was a blending of wit and sensuality with an oddly surreal touch. It became, in Jones's words, "an anti-caricature of normal perceptions." *Idyl*, like Jones, was a child of the early seventies.

At first, Jones's canvases were peopled with heroic fantastic figures, such as the knight in *Black Rose* or the swordsman in *White Bird*. But his work blossomed during that decade, as larger audiences came to admire and preserve his cover illustrations for works of high fantasy.

*The Moon and Venus, 1983*



*The White Bird, 1975*



Fantasy master Fritz Lieber appreciated the growing strength of Jones's work, commissioning him for his best-known work of that period, the first five covers in Lieber's "Fafhrd and Mouser" series, itself a commentary on the tradition of heroic fantasy.

Jones never felt his paintings derived from that tradition. "It affected my art very little," Jones recalls, "apart from helping me perceive certain conventions or subjects." Instead, his work always began with a thorough understanding of the story being told, then proceeded from the artist's own unique insights.

From the mid-1970s onward, Jones's paintings dramatically demonstrated his vivid imagination and his mastery of technique. Each work went beyond its subject matter to assume a second life. Each can be appreciated as a unity, a universe in itself that speaks to a particular human emotion. The demonic ghoul of *At Night* touches our deepest terrors in a raw, powerful image that communicates with our own darkness.

Ironically, *Blind Narcissus*, an oil created in earthtones, became the cover for a book titled *Yesterday's Lily*, the first retrospective of Jeffrey Jones's work, published in 1980. Yet it pointed the

(continued on page 87)

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# PAMELA'S GET

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*What price would you pay  
to have a perfect friend?*

by David J. Schow

ILLUSTRATION BY DOMINICK FINELLE

**T**his is a scam, young lady. Or some sort of unpolished joke I lack the crust to understand."

That *young lady* had been aimed and fired like a bullet: *Me Caesar—you bimbo*. Jaime's lip tried to curl, but when pow-wow-ing with Pavel Drake it was always a more prudent strategy to maintain a corporate attitude, an unfeeling stonewall posture. Beneath the black slate circle of the cocktail table her fist locked tight, an evil flower, slowly feeding. She was going to have to tread very cautiously to get what she wanted from this man—this cruel and condescending being whom she had kept distant from any part of her life he might corrupt. Until tonight. Now she had a painful lot to do, and maybe not much time left to do it in.

That Obscure Object of Desire was a membership-only Beverly Hills venue waitressed by foldout-class women two steps down from the game show and soap opera stratum of failure. Some still managed a local television commercial or two; all were leftovers, staling, what a Hollywood Hopeful looks like on the wane. The cheap thrill was to witness these budding stars as they shanghaied themselves into topless duty after hawking carpets and spas on the tube, still desperately pretty, willing to risk near-

ly anything for one more shot at popcorn fame. Every customer was therefore a potential backer for a career breakthrough, so each got a generous smile . . . and the only thing tainting the biological purity of such mutual parasitism was the bitterness calcifying each smile. Those smiles told you stories of how hope could sabotage lives.

Industry people—that is, movie, TV, and music video rollers, high and low—pointedly shunned the Object; some kinds of failures might prove disastrously communicable. The mainstay clientele consisted of businessmen who could appreciate such failure, in the way a conqueror might savor the captured vintages of a newly ransacked village. The Object offered the opportunity to taste the blood of one killed right beside you, and enjoy that taste because it meant you were still alive. Fat billfolds were entreated and a Hellfire Club mentality encouraged.

It was not a place a man would invite a woman for whom he held the slightest degree of good regard. It was a useful arena for tacit humiliation, or the nastier subtleties of revenge.

Jaime watched Pamela Drake's father reread the single typed page she had given him. "Maybe you should order a drink," he said, releasing a huge sigh, his eyes still relentlessly scanning. Seeking faults, footholds for





# PAMELA'S GET

assault.

A thinly misted glass of ice water stood untouched before her on its cocktail napkin. Drake's purely professional scotch and soda was half dead. At his beckoning a splay-breasted cooch hostess jiggled over to swap empties for fulls. Jaime did not want anything from the Object getting inside of her, but her throat was arid and she knew the way Drake's brain worked. A libation might signal some rough truce. Just this once. That was all she needed.

"White wine," she said. "Dry." Stay generic. One glass. Give a little that you might gain everything. If she had been out boozing with Pamela, outrageous new drinks in funny colors would have been the ground rule.

Fifty-six, without a thread of gray, was Pavel Drake of Drake Polyvinyl Products Inc. He dyes his hair, she thought, suddenly shocked. Any vanity implied a crumb of human feeling somewhere in the convolutions of this man's mean, small mind. In this place of hopelessness, where women were literally Objectified, it was a spark of hope.

Jaime needed hope. Because if the man sitting across from her did not affix his signature to that piece of paper, she was going to die.

Tears had rinsed the mascara down Jaime's face hours before. There was no denying that the person in the box had been her best friend—the kind you are permitted one per lifetime, with luck; the kind you win if the timing is just so and the clockwork of the universe smiles on you in its random way. Jaime had watched the box slide into the ground at half past ten in the morning, signing off the eight years of that friendship, leaving her to hold nothing but death and thoughts of death.

She refused to believe the way she had just stood there, dumbly, Wayfarer shades hiding the ravaged state of her eyes, her black stiletto heels sinking slowly into the cemetery turf as Pamela was subjected to ritual and clumsy eulogizing. She had died intestate so there had been no cremation; whatever she had insisted upon in private did not count here. Case closed. The box's showroom finish was kissed by grave

dirt and the strangers in attendance (relatives lacking better diversions this weekend) would soon depart to make merry on Pavel Drake's tab, their pocket obligation dispatched. If there was a casting house where one rented extras for funerals—natty folks with gerbil eyes and tight, insurance broker smiles—then Drake had scribbled them a hefty check. It was all very business-like. Jaime's eyes kept looking for the camera crews.

Thank God for Jason.

He ignored the cattle and stepped across the line to wrap Jaime up in a genuine hug. She linked arms with him and hung on. They were the only

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*Pamela had been  
her best friend,  
the kind you are  
permitted one per  
lifetime; the kind  
you win if the  
clockwork of the  
universe smiles  
on you in its  
random way.*

---

two attendees on the far side of the grave, away from the tent and folding chairs.

People expect their parents to die some dim date in the future. No one is surprised when Grandpa stops drooling long enough to bite the big one. Jaime knew she herself would experience what the medics called an "event" if she drank or tooted or drove too fast, or kept getting horizontal with those faceless and monied Brentwood body-builders. They had great asses, charm and cash to burn, and hard chromium eyes that flattened and rejected her once the contour of flesh beneath clothing was no longer sufficient mystery to hold them. When you saw yourself crying in the mirrors, when your own eyes reflected back the pain inside, then you expected bad news if only subconsciously. But buddies just did not keel over from unannounced pulmonary embolisms, not after a 20/20 checkup. Especially not buddies like Pamela, who seemed put on the earth to babysit you through one crisis after another. They were not supposed to die at twenty-eight, sitting on a sofa, eyes open, holding cold cof-

fee in a mug that read MY OTHER COFFEE CUP IS A MERCEDES. No.

The tears just would not stanch, and Jaime hated her own loss of control. There could never be enough tears for Pamela. Mickey was nowhere in sight; he hadn't bothered to show up. This angered Jaime, and she saw that Jason was flat pissed. His eyes glinted as they scanned the group and came back to her, minus Mickey. Then they settled into a dull expression of hurt and loss.

Jaime knew then just what had been lost, to all of them.

She could call up a picture-postcard-perfect image of the foursome right now: Pamela, cross-legged on a leather hassock in her living room, sipping white Bordeaux and waving her hands. Jason would be on the floor, unconsciously assuming a Sears Catalogue model pose so perfect it was funny. He'd refill glasses and sit with one forearm hooked around Pamela's thigh in a comfy way that looked possessive yet not restrictive. He hated being what he called the "whore of fashion," and so was shaggier than GQ might dictate. He was sexier than an incubus anyway. While Pamela animatedly held forth, he'd roll his eyes in that here-we-go-again expression that made him look like a befuddled cocker spaniel.

And then came Mickey, less polished, not as brash, but still a contender. His position would be directly across from Pamela's, and he would lean into her commentary as though inviting charades. Unerringly, he would call from the air the very words her gesticulations begged, causing her to take a big gulp of wine and nod yes, yes!

Last, watching all, submerged in the cushions of Pamela's thronelike Prince recliner, eyes bemused and just visible above the silvery rim of the wine goblet, would be her. Jaime. Thinking.

A perverse, I-told-you-so feeling welled up within her. More than once, she had dutifully dunned Pamela about neatening her affairs on paper. Both had acknowledged that day in the misty future when one would precede the other into death, leaving one to clean up and carry on. Neither of them had counted on their coffee conversation lopping over into nerve-numbing reality so bloody soon.

Now it was just one more thing to prompt the tears.

"I want to be cremated when I buy it," Pamela had said. "I hate the

idea of people standing around, sniffing, going *oh woe!* while I do nothing but suck formaldehyde, you know what I mean? Yuck." Her eyes, deep green, lambent as the glass of a champagne bottle, scanned Jaime's neat rooms. Her lips-busied themselves, worrying, as she contemplated just what she *did* want at her funeral, instead.

Pamela was a slender woman, given to jeans and Reeboks and the first tee or sweat off a chairback or doorknob that could pass the Pamela Drake patented Nasal Cleanliness Test. She'd settled down on the floor, nursing one of Jaime's new Napas mugs, heavy porcelain and full of hot cinnamon coffee. Her fingertips, nails bitten rigorously to the quick, traced patterns in the burgundy carpeting.

Jaime had gone to the bedroom to shuck her working duds. Pamela raised her voice. "Don't you ever get the feeling those uniforms are gonna smother you?" She rose and wandered into the hallway. The bedroom door was demurely half-shut.

"Nope," came Jaime's voice from beyond. "Did it ever occur to you that if you had been born ten years earlier, you would have been sucked into the hippie mythos and would now be a screaming, headband-wearing anachronism?"

"Ho, ho, ho."

"I'm serious, girl. Put together 1984 and designer denim and you get uniforms that would do Orwell proud."

Pamela booted the door open, grinning like a gremlin. Jaime, naked to the waist, yelped and jumped for cover, then gave it up as hopeless.

"Hey, whoa, it's only me!" Pamela's hands were up. "I come to learn, not to grope. I want to glimpse corporate American with its uniform off."

"Do you *mind*?" Pamela was always jumping frantically ahead, and Jaime resented straining to keep pace. When the decorum had been passed out, Jaime had gotten both her and Pamela's shares.

Pamela blew out breath in a huff. "Geez, okay, already!" She lifted her arms and stripped off her Ducks Deluxe t-shirt, tossing it the floor and seizing Jaime's bare arm to drag her to the dressing mirror. She posed them side-by-side, adopting an exaggerated buddy stance with one hip cocked. "There. Check this out. The gene pool doesn't have a prayer."

Jaime covered her eyes and laughed, helpless now.

She admired the casual street-poet disdain with which Pamela wore

clothes, or discarded them. She liked Pamela's body as well. It was lower-slung, larger breasted, not padded. She had scrappy, healthy honey-blond hair in contrast to Jaime's overstyled brunette, which got trimmed shorter every year in an endless process of distillation. Where Pamela had none, Jaime had fingernails—sculpted, medium-length, glossy, perfect. Pamela had wide tiger-paw feet that Jaime at first thought were snubbed and odd-looking, then came to love for their musculature and power. Pamela squinted, going on tiptoe to hold her right breast level with Jaime's left. "I think your tits are more proportionate



than mine," she said with an absolutely straight face. "I'm gonna be in trouble when I turn fifty."

The contact was unexpectedly electric; a thrill zipped through Jaime's skin and her nipple condensed to a nub.

She had never wanted to have sex with Pamela. *Call me Victorian*. Many times she had wanted to hold Pamela while she slept, to warm her when the emotionally calloused men she attracted called "time" and began sniffing elsewhere. But she was pretty sure this did not mean she wanted to jump Pamela's bones.

Well. Maybe once.

Women had invented the thing the magazines now called "male bonding," she thought. Her love and friendship with Pamela expressed itself in a million tiny gestures and touches—tactile reassurance for the constitutionally handicapped. A superstitious shielding against urban hostilities, built like a flawless pearl, layer upon layer accumulating day by day. Pamela was her Hyde half, different, damned near opposite, but essential. At times she could be infuriating. Jaime had record-

ed so much about her—things that were annoying, even insignificant, but which resonated later and now made her want to weep to mourn their permanent loss. The queer tic Pamela developed, for example, when something pierced her armor and punctured her feelings—a rapidfire batting of one eyelid plus a startled, quick sniffing noise, as though she was recoiling from an actual blow. Her maddening use of non-words. *Excuse. Idear. Irregardlessly*. Her approach to laundry, which up until recently had been to dump in half a box of detergent and set the machine on HOT.

HOT could deal with anything. Other traits were less quaint.

"You didn't ask me how my folio went down at Penn Publishing," Pamela would say. "I took it in two days ago."

"Oh. I was wondering about that," Jaime would begin, dreading what came next. "How'd it go?"

"You're so tied up in what *you're* doing, you don't care."

"Don't give me that, of course I care," Jaime was confrontational, and often not as gentle as she might be in such engagements. She had to stay in character. "So how'd—"

"You're just asking me *now* because I brought it up!" Pamela would get petulant and stick out her lip (*See, you don't really care*).

"No. Seriously. How'd it go (*God-damn it!*)?"

"I don't want to talk about it." Which meant, of course, *I win*. And just when Jaime would be ready to scream and tear hair, Pamela would humanize. "I guess I'm really a bitch, huh?"

(*Go on, tell me I'm a bitch, that's what you want*).

Ready to shriek . . .

At times like that, Jaime hated her best friend, knowing all along she still loved her twice as strongly. It was a problem now and then, as it is any time you get to know another human being intimately. But she did need Pamela to know she would always be there for her . . . even if Pamela pissed her off beyond rational endurance.

The carpeting, the Napas mugs, the wardrobe were all courtesy of Jaime's rise in retail from assistant buyer to buyer for Sanger Harris. Now, instead of lording over the paperwork for Glassware, Linens, and Bath Shoppe, she got to make the purchasing trips to New York and points past. Such work necessitated a wardrobe that Pamela would have considered an

# PAMELA'S GET

insurmountable feat of program planning, and a methodical approach to documents totally at odds with her pile-file habit.

"1984 has come and gone," Pamela said, jumping ahead to pour Jaime coffee while her friend made a pit stop in the bathroom. "In 1980, I figured we'd all be dead by then anyhow. Now I guess it's 1990."

Jaime emerged in slacks and an oversized, shapeless epaulette shirt from Banana Republic. On anyone else it would have been all wrinkles. "You'd better *not* just die on me! Without telling me, warning me first."

"I won't. I promise. But did you hear what I said about cremation? What do you think?"

"I want to sell my body to science — if I don't die old and decrepit, that is. Let 'em recycle me. Why trash corneas like these? I mean have you ever *seen* corneas this classy?"

Pamela giggled. "Not a bad idea." She pondered it, but only for an instant. Then she was off and running toward whatever came next. She never wasted too much time on a single topic; it was another lineament of her character that her anal-retentive corporate daddy hated most. Finally, "she said, 'Have you got a will, Jaime?'"

Her response was too offhand. "Sure." She had never mentioned it to anyone. More forgotten paper.

Pamela seemed to go far away fast. "I didn't know."

"Hey ... I left everything to you, kiddo." It was the only reponse Jaime could think of to lighten the tone.

Pamela's voice remained tiny. "Oh. Good."

That, for Jaime, summed up Pamela's lifelong hate affair with documents. It had been inspired, doubtless, by her father's obsession with same. No insurance. No will. No messages. Nothing.

Nobody dies this young.

When Jason caught Pavel Drake staring at them over the flower-bedecked casket, he put a protective arm around Jaime. His nearness was comforting, even if the day was too muggy, and her glove-tight formal getup too close.

"He's probably checking out my

legs," she said.

"It's sweltering out here," Jason said, breaking eye contact with the far side of the fresh grave. "But I'll be goddamned if I'm going to stand around with those mouth breathers under her dad's little circus tent."

"I was thinking the same thing. Have I ever told you what dear Daddy did at Pamela's birthday party?"

"You'll have to ... some other time." They leaned into each other. It would be so easy to simply split the funeral and go home with Jason. If they no longer had Pamela ... well, who did they have?

It was Maurois, as Jaime recol-

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*In one postcard, Pamela had specified the qualities she preferred in her friends. Jason's arrival had completed her personal equation for happiness.*

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lected, who wrote, "In literature, as in love, we are astonished at what is chosen by others." Approval of your best friend's lovemates (or books) was nice, but usually inappropriate if not embarrassing. In the case of Jason Parrish, the test was irrelevant. He was the sort of guy whose food looked better than yours because *he* had ordered it.

Pamela and Jason had met in Chicago at a horror film titled *Piece by Piece*. Charming. The screening had been downtown at Facett's Multimedia, and Jason had come to review it for the *Trib*. They were the only two who lasted through to the end credits. They wound up warming a booth at some sleepy suburban coffee shop while predawn snow drifted down to bury the city.

Career-wise, Pamela had lit off on another of her flank attacks, and half a year had passed. Jaime knew she would soon be magnetized back to her home ground. The care packages and correspondence were voluminous enough to fill a Knudsen dairy crate. When Pamela returned, live and in person, Jaime had filed the crateful of

memories in the rear of her clothes closet.

Near the end of the Chicago phase had come one postcard Jaime never forgot. In it, Pamela had specified the qualities she preferred in her closest friends, and its implication was that the arrival of Jason on the scene had completed her personal equation for happiness. During one of their thousands of long-distance calls (the bills for which overrode the gross national product of Paraguay), Jaime had gotten the lowdown on Jason in salacious detail.

Pamela had gone on at length about how considerate he was in the sack, and Jaime thought ruefully of little acorns and mighty oaks.

Jason got fired from the *Tribune*, but he had savings, and Pamela gladly filled the gaps. Then the film magazine she was designing collapsed, and she flew back to Jaime. Two months later, her connections in graphics yielded up a post at the *Herald Examiner*, and Jason was booked west on United.

Jaime's attraction to Jason was crude, at first, and entirely the fault of Pamela's giddy enthusiasm. She had seeded in Jaime the sort of interest that could not really be helped. Or stopped. It had taken a few months, but the inevitable finally happened.

Jaime felt the sparks jump across her nerve endings.

Pamela had gotten roped into an all-night session of paste-up, purely a la carte, at good pay. Jason had been loafing around her apartment; it was his day off. And Jaime had dropped by with a bottle of gray Reisling. No excuse was needed.

It was not merely the unspoken commonality between them. In the end, Jaime had moved first, casually touching him when their automatic dialogue ran thin. Their embrace quickly waxed to critical mass. They were blameless. They finished folded together on Pamela's fake Persian rug, naked, purring, and spent.

To Jaime's certain knowledge, Pamela had never guessed. Today, only the vibrations of unease lingered. She found it difficult, even with him right beside her, to recall the specifics of how they furiously plundered each other in a pile of still-warm clothing, except that she had passed into light unconsciousness following her third orgasm. Pamela had been right about his magic tongue.

"I'm sorry," she said to the casket. "I wish you were here so I could tell you I'm sorry, so you could get mad, so we could make up. It only happened that once. I guess I messed up.



But you promised you wouldn't die on me. Does this make us even?"

It was too damned easy to forget how much you could love someone, until they died and it became impossible.

The unconcerned mourners filed away and Pavel Drake beckoned the cemetery attendant, who released the catches on the aluminum rack supporting the casket. Canvas straps slowly unreeled, clicking metronomically, and the box containing Pamela settled into the dark hole.

It was almost as if Jason's infidelity was unthinkable to Pamela. Or just not relevant. With Mickey, she'd tried to matchmake.

"You want to fuck Mickey, doncha?" Pamela had opined at lunch one day. It was during the hiatus before Jason had come to Los Angeles and he and Pamela had spent a whole weekend in bed before emerging into the daylight to say hello. She could get spiteful or sharp when she wasn't getting laid regularly.

"Say what?" Jaime returned with a pained expression.

"Oh, Mickey's attracted, you bet. I saw him gobbling you up with his eyeballs."

"Jump his bones, maybe, but sleep with him, never. I'd get athlete's sheet." They both laughed. Tension defused.

Mickey was the one who never forgot Pamela. He picked the most appropriate oddball Christmas gifts for her, and beat everyone to the punchline by phoning her at midnight sharp on each of her birthdays. Mickey Banks and Pamela were a pair that quickly discovered they were better friends than lovers. The thing that endeared Mickey was his knack for bestowing just the right words to vocalize feelings, on those rare days Pamela found herself inarticulate over some transient grief. He never overlooked dates important to her. He was constitutionally incapable of it. Maybe that was why he had ducked the burial. There was no more Pamela to remember ... except for the one inside their heads.

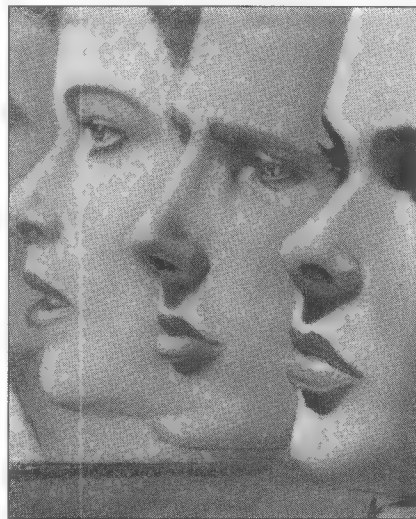
Mickey had saved Jaime from Pavel Drake at Pamela's twenty-fifth birthday party.

After four flutes of Perrier Jouet, Pamela had begun to pout and sink into her "quarter of a century" bad-rap. Her smile had turned tipsy, brittle, and forced. The whole awkward bash had come at the insistence of Pamela's father, who Jaime had heard was a big plastics baron. She had retreated to the

wet bar to grab a sparkling mineral water, and somewhere behind her Jason proposed a jokey toast to lighten the mood. Ah, the things we suffer for our friends ...

"We've achieved eye contact several times, dear, but I don't believe we've been formally inflicted on each other." Jaime turned around and shook a hand. "Pavel Drake. I'm Pamela's father. The one who's getting stuck with the bill for this rodeo."

They traded chat; Jaime thought of empty calories. She had only heard penny dreadfuls about Pamela's father, from Pamela. By the time she got a peek at his engraved business card and



had mentioned her own job in retail, she saw the wattage in his eyes bump up and realized that the brown stuff eroding the ice in his glass was not tea.

He nodded too much as he talked, working his lips probably because they were getting numb. "Good advancement in retail," he said. "Upward mobility. I admire that. It's always been Pamela's big problem—no ambition. She daydreams, you see. Twenty-five and nowhere, and she wonders why she's not happy, and with her great imagination she can't figure out why." He sniffed imperiously and glanced at Jaime's bosom before meeting her eyes again. "Oh, my daughter has a terrific imagination, Miss Ralston. But it's unproductive; she can't turn a penny profit with it. Twenty-five now. And I'm beginning to fear she's never going to amount to anything."

Already Jaime's body was begging to flee, but for Pamela's sake she made a game try: "I wouldn't say that, Mr. Drake. She's knocking out a nice little berth for herself with the graphics and designs and layouts. She's always seemed most interested in the mechan-

ics of publishing, and she's fascinated by *processes*, not—"

He cut her off with an impatient *ahhh* noise of discontent and a wave of his hand. She counted three gold rings. "That magazine horseshit," he spat. "I offered her a fucking vice-presidency and apprenticeship when she turned twenty-one. None of this entry-level asscrap. Fifty large ones per annum to start, with perks and deductions out the wazoo. And here she is ... farting around with this pissant magazine diddly. Jesus Christ in a Handi-Van ..."

He drifted, then refocused. His hand lit upon her shoulder, to perch. "Now I think *you* understand how the business world works, don't you, dear? What'd you think if I offered *you* a position, hmm? I don't know where you came from, but you look like you'd be pretty good."

Jaime could not believe she was staring into his sharktooth leer, wincing at his one-hundred-proof breath, suffering a snapshot nightmare of the sort of position Pamela's father had in mind. It almost took her balance away.

Someone tapped her shoulder, causing Drake to snatch his hand back. "Care to dance, m'lady?"

It was Mickey Banks, in his black shirt and jeans and corduroy jacket and cowboy boots, and Jaime wanted to embrace him madly. She turned while Pavel Drake was still on hold. "There's no music," she said.

"I'll hum," he said, and did, pulling her free. Jaime knew Mickey's combat smile. The grin on his face was almost it. "Excuse us, please, Mr. Drake."

"Yeah, right." Drake gestured loosely with his glass. As Mickey led Jaime away, she thought she heard Drake mutter *fucking cooze* ...

"Anything you want is yours, Banks," she said once they were across the room, and safe. "God, my brain just blanked. Pamela's *dad*..." She bit her knuckle and made a face.

"Yep. Pretty repulsive, huh?" He took a neat gulp of vodka and orange juice. "Whenever he starts cranking up his blood alcohol, I get this knotted fist right in my sternum. It won't unclench till I get out of range. I see his sheer charm rubbed you the same way."

A sympathetic phantom pain blossomed near her heart, in the hard knot of cartilage where her ribs met. "I feel sorry for Pamela, most of all."

"Me too. Imagine having that guy bounce you on his knee. Daddy Dear-

(continued on page 82)

# Eight Poems from *Songs from a White Heart*

By Jack Dann



These poems are part of a book-in-progress entitled *Songs from a White Heart*. Together they comprise, in a sense, an autobiography of my experiences with traditional Indian religion in 1978. These poems seemed to "write themselves," and became part of that intense, joyous, fearful, and compacted time. But it should be understood that they are simply the thoughts, fears, notes, and musings of a middle class white who made a foray out of his culture. They do not purport to lay open or accurately record Indian ceremonies. Traditional Indian religion is not often accessible to non-Indians, and I've been told that most accounts of Indian religion are not entirely accurate. That is not to say that Indian culture is completely closed to whites, for it surely isn't. Many young whites are in fact living traditional Indian lifestyles. Most traditional Indians are, however, wary of "Wannabees," i.e., groupies who see Indian life as glamorous and want to

be close to it.

My wife and I became involved with Indian religion as a result of a book I was researching, but I would be remiss if I didn't confess that these experiences, which are detailed in *Songs from a White Heart*, took on the form of a spiritual quest. I participated in the rights of *Hanblecheyapi* (the vision quest), *Inipi* (the sweat lodge), and the ceremonies of praying with the pipe and giving flesh; but my experiences in the sweat-lodge pervade the poems, so much so that I considered calling the chapbook *Sweat-lodge Poems*. I hope the sense of mystery and the transcendent fire of the sweat-lodge come through in these poems.\*

Although the events that prompted these poems seem far away to me now, that time subtly changed the way I experience the world. I recall being at a friend's vision-quest where everyone was "giving flesh," a ceremony in which the medicine man cuts the suppliant's skin with a razor and drops the tiny pieces of flesh into a colored square of cloth, which the participant later ties to the branch of a nearby tree as a totem. I asked the medicine man why people were doing this, and he looked at me as if I had just asked the most stupid question imaginable. He laughed and answered, "Because that's the only thing you've got to give. Your skin is the only thing you really own. So you give a little of it to your friend, to help him. You give a little of yourself. You take a little pain for him."

And so I gave flesh.

For my wife Jeanne. For my son Jody. For my friend Albert. For all of us. And for a little while I lost hold of my ego. There and in the sweat lodge where I burned for a few minutes, or a few hours, I had the revelation—or aberration depending on your point of view—that perhaps down deep in the quick of our unconscious our basic impulses are not selfish and self-seeking.

Of course, back then I also felt the wings of eagles beating in the sweat-lodge.

But that was a long time ago. . . .

\*Temperatures as high as 140 to 170 degrees Fahrenheit have been reported in sweat-lodges; and, indeed, I've seen people's skin blister from the heat, heat so intense it feels *cold*!

"I died for a while . . ."; "The ground has a face . . ."; "Ceremony," ©1980 by Jack Dann. Originally appeared in *The Anthology of Speculative Poetry*.

## Ceremony

I burn in the darkness  
with the others. I  
fold into my sweat-stinking  
blanket

My body hot wax my hair  
on fire. I look down  
at the rock people glowing  
before me.

Steam chokes me, spirits  
flicker in the round  
blackness and I tell myself  
I'm not afraid.

Oh, Wakan Tanka, what is  
this Jew-boy doing here  
burning for a vision  
in the sweat lodge?



## Nerve

"Albert," I say  
"I feel hot."  
He looks at me  
questioning.

"Like a wire," I say  
and he nods. "I  
feel sweaty and removed  
from the world."

He sits down beside me  
and promises not to let the  
others take me when I  
fall off the edge.

"No hospitals," I say  
"No institutions no electric  
shocks, I'm already hot."  
"No shocks," he says and makes a prayer.

So I fall. And find a feather in  
my hair. Through layers of gauze, I see  
him walking me like a dog about to  
be made into stew.

Then he sweats my body in the lodge  
and takes it-not-I to the hill  
where the visions wait.  
And there I meet myself.

The medicine man tells me.  
I will not die  
and shouts for his people  
so they may live.

He calls the eagle  
and I feel its feathers  
and the beating of the  
world as I breath.

My insides are bellows  
for the spirits touching  
me with feathers of their  
sweat-soaked dream.



It is a circle.  
Albert sweats me  
and cuts my flesh.  
We smoke the pipe  
and I embrace him  
and leave him to  
the hill to vision  
quest. All the  
dreams like children  
growing as I watch  
my companion become  
a medicine man.

A good dream, this  
circle. But had we  
known how dark it  
could be, had we known  
the terrors and the  
wreckage, the losses  
and longing, would  
we have dreamed this  
circle  
?



It was a good day to die  
A good day to sweat  
A good day to pray  
A good day to be with friends  
A good day to be alone on the hill  
And vision quest

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SCOTT EAGLE

The ground has a face  
Yellow with autumn today

The trees make a grotto  
The ties on the sweat-lodge are red

We smoke the pipe  
Pipestone red as the ties

The smoke rises to the four directions  
We pull for the spirits and exhale the light



Oh, Wakan Tanka  
Make it hard

Make it hard in our sweat lodge  
Make it hard on our vision quests

Let our bones melt in the steam  
and fragrant sweat of prayer

Oh, Great Mystery  
We want to live



I died for a while  
and rode the black and  
silver and saw the spirits  
and found the visions  
and sang the songs. I  
found my name. I lost  
myself in the dark where  
no one could help me.  
I found nothing but voices  
and the eagles that  
flew in the sweat-lodge  
for the spirits.

# DREAM

(continued from page 39)

They embraced. "You'll call me, won't you?" Her voice became serious.

"I don't know; it may be difficult. I also think it would be a good idea if I didn't. Logan's—"

"Don't worry, David. He's jealous as all get out, but he really doesn't care. We're just more possessions, something to list like the Porsche, the boat, the collections. He doesn't love anything, doesn't respect anything." Peg shook her head and stepped away from him. "He's begun to collect women now, the way he collects everything else." She paused and looked away and looked in.

"But don't worry about him, sweetheart. We've done nothing. He's not going to do anything. He doesn't have the soul; he traded it for enough new patients to give him the money to buy the ranch."

David kissed her. "So you keep saying. And you keep staying—"

"Yes, I stay. This is how it has to be. For now. The time is wrong. We've talked about it, David. I'm here, you're here. Trust me." She kissed him gently, then reached into her pocket. "Here," she said, "take this with you. It'll tie us when we're apart."

David looked at what she had given him—a piece of pink ribbon, like the one around her neck, holding the gold cross.

"What's this?"

"One of the ribbons from my old toe shoes." She touched the piece around her neck. "I cut them off when I threw the shoes away. I wanted to keep part of the dream."

"Now, you take this one with you, wherever you're going." She tied it loosely around his neck, over the gold chain holding his Star of David. She kissed him again, quickly, hearing Logan's footsteps as he approached the room, finally missing them. "Go. And come back."

There is a nameless mountain growing from the side of a creek near a place called Three Mile Curve in a corner of West Virginia. On the side of the mountain is a table of land, and a cave. Across the creek there was once a mining camp, ramshackle homes, a beer hall, the company store. Malek had come there first twenty five years earlier, with his first camera and his life ahead of him—a time of beginnings. On hot summer nights, he slept in front of the cave and heard ghosts whisper. Or the wind in the trees. And

there came a time when he had to leave.

And there came a time when he had to return. What drew him to the mountainside was more than wanderlust, more subtle than a search. His first photographs had been of the land around him; it was only slowly, as he became aware of the people on that land, of the slag heaps and of the fear etched into the faces of the men who went into the mines, that he turned his lens away. He had dreamed that it was because they had used the land and not given to it that their lives had been out of joint; that they had learned to fear and that their wives had learned to cry. Finally, having scarred the land once too often, it struck back.

---

*Malek dreamed of  
a woman running  
east, of horses.  
She wore a buck-  
skin dress, white  
in the moonlight,  
a dark stain on  
the bodice. Her  
hair was black,  
and in braids . . .*

---

Now he came to a place that used to have a name; after the dam broke and the water swept through in a rage, it was considered dead. But it wasn't deserted. Like Lazarus, a spirit moved within it. Some of those who had survived the flood tracked back through the mud as the water receded, reclaiming what was theirs. The mining company had left with the waters; the company store was no more, but the beer hall, Paulie Boy's, was there.

And Malek's cave was there, too high to have been touched by disaster. That is where he returned, pitching a tent at the beginning of a summer and causing the hollow to echo the sounds of his axe.

As Malek built, the spirit brought the town back to life and he was accepted as a part of it . . . the strange man with the ribbon around his neck, the Jew, building his place, but always being part of what was being reborn, pitching in when they needed him even though he refused all offers of help in his own work. Some of them were just as happy that he turned them down. Although the offers were made in good faith, a few remembered the legends of the haunted cave. The strangest thing about this

stranger was that he didn't seem to care about the stories. It was said that a spirit lived in the cave, that a woman had been left there to die, once too long ago to remember when or why. Those who believed the story said that she wore a white garment stained with blood, that she hypnotized trespassers with violet-dark eyes and then strangled them with her thick, black braids. Malek laughed at the stories, remembering the voice of the ghost, or the wind in the trees, and never dreamed of a woman in white.

As the October chill began to creep, he finished his work: The cabin was built against the mountain's side, three walls of wood, the fourth the living rock. The mouth of the cave was made part of the house, a fifth room opening off what he thought of as the spare room. It was a home: warm, feeling lived in. He pictured Peg sitting in the front room, the one with light, turning her sketches into oils. One that she had given him before he left hung on the bedroom wall so that the morning light would strike it. All that was missing was Peg. He felt alone, but not lonely.

And went down the road to Paulie Boy's, to have a few last beers, to say good-bye and arrange to have someone keep an eye on his house until he could get back to move in. He was sitting at the counter, watching the room behind him as it was reflected in the stained backbar mirror. He couldn't be sure, then, whether it was the drinking or the imperfections in the glass that made the scene so blurred. Not that it mattered much. Except that he would have liked to have had a clearer view of the woman he thought he had seen. Then someone opened the door, bringing the cold in from outside where the rain came down, hard. So hard, it brought memories and tears to the people who had survived the last flood. Thunder banged down the mountainside, rumbling with the sound of a mine collapse. Men stopped their banter and looked anxiously through the rain-stained windows and conversation died for a moment or two, then slowly resumed.

Malek turned around and looked at the room, happy with his friends. The arrangements had been made. It was time to leave again.

That night, for the first time, he slept in his new bed, built that afternoon. The bedroom walls glowed red and orange and yellow with the flames reflecting from the fireplace. Outside, wind curled around the cabin, looking for places to enter. Rain pounded against the roof and windows. Malek dreamed—

*of a woman running east, of horses.*



*The woman wore a buckskin dress, white in the moonlight, a dark stain on the bodice. Her hair was black, and in braids . . .*

— he had lost the dream by the time he awoke, but remembered dreaming.

In the morning, he left the mountain-side, first for New Orleans, to close his home there. Then for Houston, where he had a showing of new work, including some pictures of people building a town.

"Where's the surprise? What did you bring me?" Peg laughed.

David gestured at the wall, where a black-and-white high-contrast photograph of a half-built house hung alone. She could see the skeleton of the building, and the dark mouth of the cave behind it. "I don't have a photograph of the finished cabin. You'll have to come and see it for yourself."

Peg smiled, and traced a finger across the surface of the print, as if to fill in the missing lines of a sketch. She paused when she touched the cave, the way David had once when showing her a photograph of ripples on a lake. Then she waved to Logan, calling him over. "See what David's building, Logan. Isn't it nice?"

"Might be. Can't tell yet. Where is it? Doesn't look like anywhere around here."

"It's not. It's in West Virginia, up in the mountains. A place I found years ago. Always wanted to go back; now I have."

"Well, whatever turns you on. I'd've thought that you'd stop trying to run away by now, though. Settle down." He looked at Peg. "Find a good woman and start livin'."

"Soon, Logan. I've met someone; just waiting a bit longer." Standing behind her husband, Peg stared at David. She touched the ribbon at her neck, touched her shoulder.

And told Logan she wanted a divorce, later, as he sat on the edge of their bed. "Never," he said, and laughed. Peg stared down at him, and shook her head.

"That's the wrong answer, Logan." She turned and went into her studio, and studied some of the sketches on the walls. She moved to her left with small, almost skipping steps, circling the room, then slumped to the thick rug, and slept. Thus the beginning ends; the end begins.

That night, in his hotel room, Malek dreamed of a battle and of a warrior woman with her hair in braids, and he felt the rush of wind and noise and the trembling of the earth and the heat of a fire. He forgot the dream when the sunlight pierced the thin drapes, and

spent the day in silence.

But heard the sounds and felt the trembling again at the ranch at night, after yelling "Fire," and watching the glow build behind the barn and move toward the stables. And as the heat grew, Malek rushed toward a stumbling Logan and stopped to watch him fall under the thrashing legs of the panicking horses; and heard the thuds and whinnies and a scream swallowed by the rushing sounds of the hands coming to fight the fire, save the horses, and the shrill sirens of emergency vehicles; in the middle of the concerto of fear, Malek did not save Logan Wright. And though everyone expressed sadness at the accident, Malek



knew there were no accidents.

The sky was so clear and blue and high that it hurt to look at it. It was a beautiful day. A perfect day for a wedding.

Yisgadad v'yiskadash shemay rabo . . . David Malek mouthed the ancient Aramaic words of the sacred mourner's prayer and shivered in the chill of the late autumn West Virginia morning. Clouds began to mount, snow was possible. Two years, he thought with that part of himself that had split away and was watching the group at the gravesite. He had never felt more lonely. Or less alone.

They had traveled to the places that had been special to them separately: Moose Creek, Idaho and Santa Fe, San Francisco and a deserted cay somewhere between Florida and the South Pole, a corner of Oklahoma and the edge of Maine, and made them something to share. And they found new things that were theirs alone: The headwaters of the Mississippi and the moonbow at Cumberland Falls, the Vietnam War Memorial and Little Big Horn. They traveled and grew together until it was time to go home.

"We've been moving a long time, David," she said one night as they drove away from the lake where they had first met. They had watched the deer drink in the morning, and he had stood on the shore, skipping stones across the surface of the water as she swam and dove, emerged and danced along the rocks. "It feels like forever, like it's time to stop."

Yisborach v'yish-tab-bach, v'yispor . . . David shivered and smelled the change in the weather.

They reached the cabin six months after their wedding. There was snow all around, and fresh cords of wood stacked under tarps in a little shed that he hadn't built. The rooms smelled fresh; wood was laid for fires in the bedroom and the front room. The sliding door he'd installed across the mouth of the cave was closed.

"Oh, David, it's everything I thought it would be." She moved through the rooms, touching the furniture he'd built, looking into the cabinets as if she knew what would be in them. Her voice was a song, her movements a dance. "Thank you, David, for bringing me home."

"Thank you, Peg, for bringing me home." He took the pink ribbon from around his neck and tied it to a hook over the bed. "This is where we are tied to, now. I love you, Peg."

"And I, you, David." She removed the ribbon she wore, and tied it next to his. "Make love to me."

Later, they slept, and David dreamed:

*A warrior stood surrounded by a battle. He wore a sash—dull red, with four horizontal bands of yellow quills spaced eight inches apart on its lower half. His hooked lance, wrapped with otter fur, tied with buckskin in four places and decorated with small eagle feathers, was driven into the ground, through the sash.*

Even as he dreamed, David recognized the painting hanging across from the bed, recognized the warrior, knew that his name was Raven Eye. He brought his eagle bone whistle to his lips and then began to sing.

David awoke with a start, drenched with sweat even though the fire had gone out and the room was cold. He reached for Peg and found only her pillow. He wrapped the quilt around himself, then reached for the matches on the table next to the bed and lit the Coleman lantern. "Peg? Peg, where are you?" There was no sound but the hiss of the burning mantle.

Still shivering, David walked through the cabin to the back, to where the cave opened into the house. The

# DREAM

sliding door was open. "Peg, are you in there?" He moved more quickly now, not quite running, feeling the weight of the lantern as it preceded him into the cave. He saw a flash of white.

Peg turned in her sleep, her nightgown gleaming in the lantern's harsh light. "Peg. Peg, wake up."

She awoke slowly, dazedly. "David? Oh . . ." She smiled wanly. "I woke up and you looked so peaceful; you smile in your sleep, did you know that? Anyway," she stretched and yawned, stood up, "I wanted to see the cave and I just came back here—You've done a nice job, you know, turning it into your darkroom. So, it's so warm and cozy, and the cot was there, kind of waiting for me, like, and I lay down for a minute. . . ." she stretched up to put her arms around his neck, kissed him, and pulled him down onto a mat of blankets, holding him tightly. He felt her warmth and strength and they drifted off into sleep together. He didn't dream again that night, though he did think to ask for just a second what she had used for light, since he hadn't turned on the power yet. But sleep came too quickly and too fully.

And life was full. The little town grew below them on the other side of the frozen creek. They worked and walked, played and talked. It was if they had always known one another, sensing needs before the other felt them, filling empty spaces before the gaps were discovered. Then, one night in summer, as the sky lowered and lightning played in their mountain's peak, they went down to Paulie Boy's for a party.

Outside, thunder rattled, shaking the windows. The creek rose, slowly. Inside, the tables had been pushed back against the walls and the thirty or so people who made up the community danced to the jukebox, everyone drinking too much and trying not to pay attention to what was happening outside where the creek continued to rise and the darkness of the storm seemed to stretch into infinity. And yesterday.

Finally, sweating and footsore, David stopped dancing and stood at a window, a bottle of beer moving from his lips to his forehead as he tried to cool down. He watched Peg sketching something on a paper napkin and laughing with Mollie's daughter, as if sharing secrets. Lightning stroked down with deadly intent; in the sudden blue

and ozone-smelling flashes shadows moved.

He went to the door and opened it, feeling the rain pelt against him. Behind him someone yelled, "Dave, damnit, shut the door. You're lettin' the chips get wet."

"Okay, okay," he called over his shoulder, waving upraised arms as if in surrender, "just gettin' a breath of air." He looked as far into night as he could, but saw nothing. He stepped back into the room and pulled the door closed against the storm.

Sitting at the counter, David watched Peg in the backbar mirror, and sipped at his beer. She danced with one and then another, flirting with the men, but in the

*Now each moment  
took him further  
away and closer,  
as if he were  
leaving somewhere  
without going  
anyplace, finding  
something he  
hadn't known he'd  
lost.*

harmless fashion of someone who knows that no one will take it seriously; she wore innocence. And finally, breathless and glowing, she came to him at the bar, put her lips to his ear, and whispered, "Take me home. I need you."

Heads covered by rubberized ponchos, they ran to their Jeep. He had put the canvas top on, and the sides, and they sat for a moment in the cloth cocoon and listened to the rain while the windows fogged over. "C'mon, big boy, you takin' me home or ain't you? 'Cause there's lotsa guys in there who will if you ain't man enough."

"Done and done, woman." He started the engine, backed around into the road. In gear, David drove with one hand, the other resting on Peg's left thigh, feeling her heat and muscle and strength against his palm. Peg looked at her husband's face and knew it was not a time to talk, only to touch. Her hand, gentle, undemanding, on his leg. Thumb stroking, easing, soothing.

Even though it was a summer evening, the rain had brought a chill, and as soon as they were in the cabin, David built a fire in the bedroom fireplace and they lay on top of the covers, whispering whatever it is lovers whisper and other things: "Is it

a good time, Peg?"

More than anything, now, they wanted a child. "I hope so, David." She giggled into his shoulder. "But what the heck, right?"

David dreamed:

*Raven Eye standing in front of his enemies—the Ute—surrounded by other members of the Dog-men society, each with his sash lanced to the earth. Wherever the lance is, that is Arapaho land. Raven Eye could not remove the lance; that had to be done by another member of the society. There could be no retreat until the Dog-men ordered it. He was defenseless, then.*

*As he stood, he heard the scream behind him, Steps High Fawn's scream; his wife. Her back was to him, to the battle, and he could see blood seeping through her buckskin dress. Dream Speaker, a man of great magic, a leader of the Sweat Lodge society, held her, seemed to be whispering to her. Dream Speaker would not fight on this day or any other; he was there to bring power with his medicine. He wanted Steps High Fawn and although Raven Eye would have allowed her to go with another member of the Dog-men—because that was their privilege—none had ever asked—because that is their honor. Dream Speaker was honored as a man of power, a strong dreamer to whom all the spirits talked, but now he was without honor. And Raven Eye's lance stood through his sash and this piece of land was home. And he could not move.*

**A**l yisroel v'al tsa-de-ka-yo, v'al kol man . . . David looked over his shoulder at his friends who had come down for this strange rite of burial, who came in support of him to participate in something which, for many of them, smacked of heresy. He was sure that more than one minister would have something to say about this. He knew the young rabbi would, but he wouldn't be there to hear it. Thé cold reached into him. He could feel the piece of pink ribbon lying loosely against his throat.

"David, you have to promise me something."

"Anything, my love. Just name it."

"I'm serious, David! No joking."

It was a beautiful day in late September. The mountain had begun to wear its autumn coat of flaming colors; the mornings found a light frost on the grass in front of the cabin. As the temperature shifted, mist and fog dressed the land before them. It was a perfect day for making promises, the kind of promises meant to be kept.

"Okay," he said solemnly. "I swear. Now, what am I swearing to?"

"Right. Now listen. And stop smirking. I'm working on a painting. It's very special and I don't want you to peek. When I'm at the easel, stay out of the room; when you're in the room, leave the drop cloth over the canvas. You can't see it until I say so. That clear?"

"Yeah, clear. And easy enough."

"Good. Now, get out of here and let me get to work."

For the next month, they both worked. David rediscovered the power of his first work, as if the land itself were a willing model, and he understood the needs of the model sitting for the portrait. Then the photographs began to take on a new quality, one of unspecific eeriness. There were times he could swear that there were things in the pictures that weren't in his viewfinder when he snapped the scenes. She told him it was only the mist, only the play of light, only his imagination.

Whatever it was Peg was doing, she was happy with it, and no matter how David cajoled or begged, teased or whined, she would say nothing about it; she would just reach up and place a finger on his lips. "There's time enough," she might say, "we have all the time there is. You'll see." That was her promise, and she always kept her promise.

Then, one night in bed, Peg pulled the covers back and rolled close to David. "I have a surprise for you, my beloved," she whispered.

David put his arms around his wife. He felt a fearful exaltation. Her breath smelled of mint, her hair of herbs, her body of the world after rain. In the moonlight, her eyes darkened from gray to violet. He'd never noticed that before.

"I have a wonderful surprise and gift for you, David," Peg whispered against his throat. And then she died in his arms.

They came and took her to the hospital and he sat as the doctors asked their questions about her health and explained to him about embolisms and cerebrovascular accidents. Remembering how Peg's eyes had grown violet, he listened and nodded and forgot their words. There are no accidents.

And when Reverend Morris drove him home from the hospital and offered to conduct a service, David shook his head.

"No, thank you, Jim. But I think I have to bury her in a tradition I understand—"

"But—"

"Please, no. I know how you feel but, well, burial is for the living, right? Wherever Peg is, she'll approve. And she'll welcome your prayers, I know. But

this will have to be done my way.

"What you could do for me though, if you would, is introduce me to a rabbi around here. Is there one, even?"

The minister shook his head in dismay. "Of course there is, down in the city. If it all means so much to you, you'd think that you'd have found out about...."

"I'm sorry, David. This isn't the time for lectures. I'll call him for you, his name is Witt, Eric Witt. It's a shame you didn't know him before this."

"Thank you, Jim. Very much. For everything."

Rabbi Witt welcomed David, offering him the aid of the small, dying synagogue. "You'll need a *minyan*, people to help while you're sitting *shivah*. Whatever, we'll do what we can."

The service was held in a small chapel that the congregation reserved for these needs. David, standing over the casket, didn't hear the rabbi walk in behind him.

"What...?" The word sounded as if the speaker had just been hit in the stomach. David had been tying the ribbon with the cross around Peg's neck.

Witt looked at David, sternly. "I think we should close the casket, Mr. Malek. It's traditional."

David looked calmly into the young rabbi's eyes, saw the questions. "Yes, I think you're right." David leaned down

again, straightened the cross in the hollow of Peg's throat, kissed her on the forehead and lips, and brought the lid down. Behind the men, the people of the town that used to have a name began to enter the chapel, coughing nervously.

**O**-seh sholom bim'-ro-mov, hu ya-a-seh sholom, olenu v'al kol yisroel, v'imru: Amen. The Kaddish was done. David looked into the grave, at the reflections of the weak sun on the highly polished pine. He knelt to pick up a handful of coarse earth and threw it onto the coffin, heard the hollow bounce. He took a deep breath and turned away, toward the east, toward the entrance to the small cemetery.

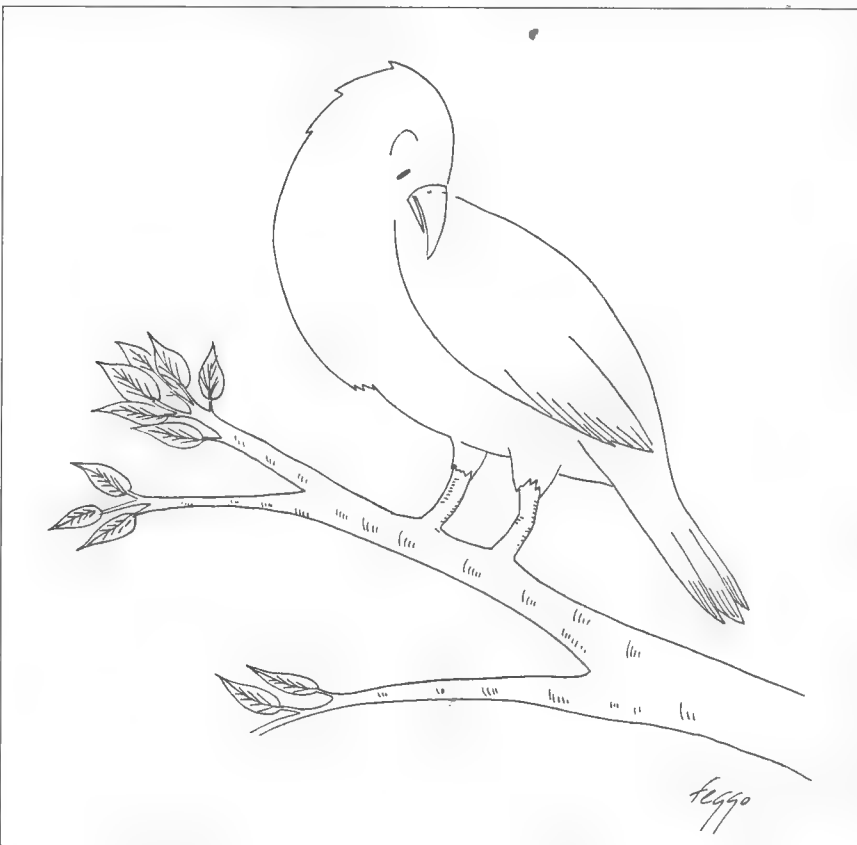
Two years, he thought, and the time before that. *Peg, you said we had nothing but time*, the words were a cry in his heart, *and now...* And now, he thought, I will go on or I will die, but sometime I will join you.

"Mr. Malek..." David felt the rabbi's hand on his shoulder. "Is there anything I can do for you now?"

"No, thank you, Rabbi Witt. You've done more than I could have asked for. Thank you. I think I'll just go home, now."

"We'll come to visit you, for the prayers." David couldn't tell whether it was a statement or a question.

"Yes, that would be nice. You know



# DREAM

where my cabin is, up on the mountain?"

"We'll find it. Tomorrow?"

"Yes. No, no, make it the day after. That would be better. Okay?"

"As you like. Your friends will take you home now?"

David looked down at the quickly filling grave and up at the trees bending bare branches in the wind. He was warm now, and felt no more loneliness, felt no longer alone. "Yes, my friends will take me home."

Malek walked through the cabin, feeling the different feel of the rooms. In Peg's studio, he looked at the covered easel, at the painting which might or might not be finished. He went to it slowly, touching the cloth draped over it on a frame so that it would not come into contact with the canvas while the paint was wet. He lifted a corner, then dropped it slowly. No. Maybe tomorrow.

He heard his neighbors coming in, bringing food for him, companionship. He didn't want the emptiness now, though he didn't need the company. He welcomed them, showed the women where the plates were, the silverware. These were people used to wakes, he realized, people who drank and laughed and told stories about those who had died. It was a good tradition, and when finally everyone had left, and he fell into bed, he didn't expect to dream.

*Dream Speaker was pulling Steps High Fawn, dragging her away, retreating with her. In front of Raven Eye, the horsemen were coming, riding right at him. His wife shouted, and he turned, saw the arrow piercing her right shoulder, the blood running down over her breast. Then the horses were on him.*

The large, black bird fluttered its wings as it landed on the tree limb. A cold wind keened across the Plains, causing the People of Our Own Kind to curl in their sleep. They had won, and credit was given to the members of the Sweat Lodge society and to the bravery of the Dog-men and Lance Men. Raven Eye would be missed; and his woman, Steps High Fawn who had fought bravely beside him and was probably one of those captured.

She lay tied to some trees miles from the village. Dream Speaker would return for her, she knew that as she knew that

Raven Eye was dead. She had heard his song and he had heard her screams. Now, she heard the shaman's approach, could smell the stink of him.

Spent, he slept. The bird in the tree cawed and flew down from its roost. On the ground, it cocked its head, looking at the woman covered in blood, her eyes closed, her breathing ragged. He hopped around the body of the man lying next to her and pecked at the rope holding her left arm to a branch. She felt the movement and opened her eyes, watched the bird climb and soar against the circle of the full moon, then light on a branch, pecking at something.

Steps High Fawn pulled with her left

**David put his arms around his wife. He felt a fearful expectation. Her breath smelled of mint, her hair of herbs, her body of the world after rain.**

arm, and felt the rope give. This was not her time to die. As she struggled, the bird returned, two strips of cloth in its beak. He cawed again.

She didn't realize that her hand was free; feeling was gone. It was when she felt it against her body that she knew. The bird hopped excitedly while the woman reached for the knife at Dream Speaker's hip. She cut her other hand free, then stood silently, staring at the man on the ground. With a scream that shook the mountains, she thrust the blade into his heart and then cut his head from his body, impaling it on a naked branch.

The black bird rose with a roar of wings and pecked at the head's lolling tongue. Steps High Fawn found her dress and put it on. She braided her hair, tying it with the pieces of ribbon the bird had brought. She looked back—this was her past, now; she couldn't return to the People. She walked out of the copse, untied Dream Speaker's pony, and began her trek toward the morning sun, toward the beginning.

Eventually she reached a land of mountains and rushing waters. She found shelter and waited.

Malek woke to a perfect morning, the clouds threatening the snow of the day before blown clear. The sky blue and high; the sun brighter than it had any right to be in that place and that time. He knew he had dreamed in the night, but he couldn't remember what he had seen. It would come back, he knew. Just as he knew that it was time to look at Peg's painting.

He dressed and made coffee, delaying the moment until it demanded to be answered. Then he pulled the cloth away.

In the center, a large raven in silhouette against the moon. Surrounding it, scenes: The scenes from his dream. It made every bit of sense, really, once he stopped to think about it. And he did think about it, and remembered that there are no accidents.

All day, while he went about doing what had to be done, he thought about it, and nodded. And in the evening, he went down to Paulie Boy's, where they were surprised to see him, but he explained that life goes on, that all they had was that and time, and that Peg would have wanted this.

He drank at the counter for an hour, watching the room in the mirror. But no one came for him, no one came to lead him away. Had he been wrong? Was it all a ridiculous fantasy born out of his grief? Malek didn't know, and now he didn't want to think about it. He wanted only to sleep.

He started a fire in the bedroom fireplace, and crawled into bed. Tendrils of mist whispered up out of the ground and into the cabin as if seeking purchase; finding Malek, they wrapped themselves around him.

They pulled, and he knew he was right. The cave door slid open and the woman in white stepped into the room, her braided hair held by pink ribbons, the stain gone from her breast. She held out her hand and David rose.

"We have only time," the woman said.

"We have only time and more. Thank you for bringing me home, Steps High Fawn."

The cabin was a heap of ash by the time anyone from the town across the creek could get up to it. They waited for the ruins to cool, joined by the rabbi and the members of the congregation who had come to pray with David Malek. The gray heap was relieved by one spot of color, a piece of pink ribbon caught by one of the rocks that had come sliding down the mountain, blocking the entrance to the cave.

The ribbon waved in the wind, and was torn loose, blowing down into the creek where it floated away, into the river and around Three Mile Curve. ■



# BLOODIED

(continued from page 43)

vanished as I held my dead brother."

Tears streamed down the face of the old man and his voice cracked with an old longing, a sorrow that scaled a long-ago sky.

"I moved his hands so that the weapons fell from them, for in death he still had his feet set to climb the hunter's path. I held his torn face against me, made and broken, slain and forgiven by the great wolf's stronger way. And it was a face without peace or kindness, and it was not good to look upon, for it was my face too."

The old man touched the wrinkled corners of his eyes, found the tears and dropped his hands, as if bloodied.

He stood there motionless on the old road and it seemed as if he would speak no more.

"What happened?" asked the white man, and there was something strange in his voice, a new emotion. His face was white and his hands had stopped moving across the page. The last of the old man's words had gone unrecorded.

"The noise of a hunter's heart!" cried the old man. "As its feathers are once spread, so it must always take flight!"

"I held my death against me in my brother's body! But do young men understand death? Only for a second and never deeply enough, for revenge was in my veins and my hunter's heart still made utterance to me.

"I threw his body from me, and the trail of the great wolf burned in the sun. I stabbed my arm so the blood would know how to flow and I went toward the great wolf, singing my death song!

"He saw my great anger and knew fear, for he fled from me then. But no creature can run faster than vengeance. I ran through places men did not go and did not see them. I ran into nights unseen and days unnumbered and saw only the great wolf, living for his death or mine.

"The forest tried to hold me back, tearing at me, and my blood flowed again and again, tree and branch wounded, but I felt only the hunting wound and there is no greater pain.

"We met, that great wolf and I. In a forest of azure and ice, in a valley where the sun never shines but burns.

I threw myself upon the wanderer and had the strength that comes to a man only once in his lifetime, and then comes never again. I was thunder.

"I was lightning.

"I was death in all of its faces.

"The great wolf tried to sink his claws in me, tried to rip my heart out but I threw him off. With my knife, I ripped his eyes out and we came at each other again.

"My knife was out and drove home and I meant to make a shadow of him but his jaws closed on my arm and the knife fell from my fingers. I tried to throw him off but his jaws locked and could not be forced off. My arm went around his grey neck and tightened and squeezed and then death rattled in his throat.

"The wind fell out of his empty eyes. My arm strained and I held him against me, ever tighter until it seemed I would squeeze his head off and I felt

no pain from the wolf jaws fastened upon my arm.

"No pain! 'See my, younger brother!' I cried in my joy and I crushed the dead wolf against me till I thought I would pull him through my own chest.

"I had conquered him. The seed of his dark soul was dead, strangled by my hand into darkness and I looked down in triumph at his wolf face and saw my brother.

"My arm encircled his sad dead face and the wolf-bitten arm had my brother's blood on it. And the wolf was my brother dead and he was me alive. Young brother equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I, Walking Wolf.

"I had been blind in the blood.

"I saw the emptiness of the hunter's life.

"In one hand one holds a passion for death. But is not wisdom another

## Craig Kee Strete



## A Change of Worlds

Craig Kee Strete has spent most of his life traveling between worlds. Although he was raised in a middle class community in the Midwest, his Cherokee heritage gave him a sense of separateness from the world around him. That sense of difference touches all of Strete's writing. Jorge Luis Borges, in his introduction to Strete's short story

collection *If All Else Fails* ... writes: "With this book, we risk the dangerous power of genius, one who can construct a universe within the skull to rival the real."

Strete feels that Native Americans' detachment from Western culture give them certain advantages. "Indians are morally and ethically very sophisticated," he says. "They ultimately live life on better terms than their white counterparts."

In a forthcoming collection, *Death Chants* (from which "As If Bloodied on a Hunt Before Sleep" is taken), Strete has attempted to reveal a common link that exists among all Native American traditions. "There is a great diversity within the Indian nation," he says. "Different tribes reflect different values. But there is still a sense of spirit which comes through."

He considers that the Indian's religious and spiritual culture is another reality altogether, and feels that when he writes about the mysticism that exists within this system, it shouldn't be labeled as "magic" or "fantasy."

"I don't write fantasy," he asserts. "I only write what I know to be true. Every writer has his or her own philosophy, and it is possible that the realism within my writing may well lead into a 'magical' realm."

Strete acknowledges that contemporary culture may be causing some of the "old ways" to be forgotten, but he contends it is impossible for Indian culture ever to cease to exist. "There is no death for the Indian," he explains, "only a change of worlds."

hand with a passion for life? The arrow of youth is strung on a mighty bow, but it falls in the dust.

"I felt the ache in my arm, the great wolf jaw bite, and my life-hating heart twisted in that painful flame, in that great ripping wolf bite.

The jaws of the wolf are long and terrible and speak of love. It fastened upon my arm and tore out my heart."

Walking Wolf bowed his head, the fever had passed, leaving him old, ruined, an empty husk of a man.

"And I would hunt no more, for I had no longer a hunter's killing heart. And so, I buried my dead, but they have followed me all my days. They follow me now and I have no heart big enough to give them rest, so deeply did the wolf bite me."

The white man stared at the pages, the writing forgotten, thinking of his own life perhaps, of a hunt he had begun, of many hunts and a stalking season within himself.

The notebook had a number on it, like a notch a hunter makes to number his kills.

Walking Wolf stared at the white man, as if seeing him for the first time. The old man was full of sorrow, of remembered grief.

"That is how a wolf can bite an arm and rip out a heart," he said and he stared down at the white man's notebook, as a hunter stares at the weapons of another to appraise their worth.

"Why is it that your hand is still?" asked the old man, "and you no longer take down in writing what you have sought?"

The white man stood up suddenly. There was a strange look on his face, a look that the old man almost understood. The white man folded the notebook up, stared at it for a moment as if seeing something else in his hand, then tossed it on the fire. It caught fire easily and began to burn.

"I stopped writing," said the white man. "Because a wolf bit my arm."

The old man did not understand. "You think I lied," he said bitterly, and he pulled back the sleeve of his shirt and showed the white man the old scar the wolf had made in a time long gone.

The white man held out his arm, and rolled back his sleeve, "My scars don't show," he said. "But my heart was ripped out too."

Then the old man understood, as one hunter understands another.

He looked at the white man.

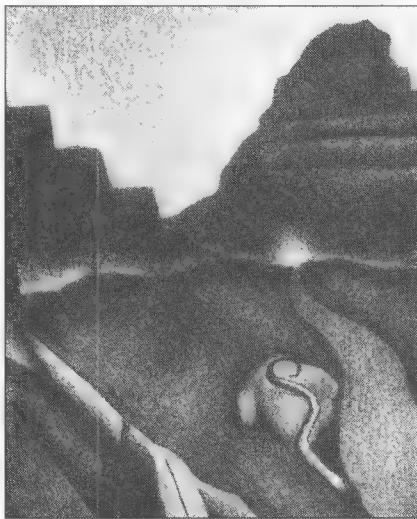
And saw the scars. ■

## VILCABAMBA

(continued from page 47)

stand on it and leap off into nothing. Others have had that, too. I eat the last of my food and settle in to spend the night behind the stepping stone to nowhere. It seems if I die here it may well be of starvation unless I find a trail soon, that goes somewhere.

That night I have a dream that all the boulders and pebbles coming down



on me are friends and are sending me messages, the small ones whispering, the large roaring. I wake with a headache. I stare out over the mountains, puzzling over the dream for a while. There's nothing to eat. I try to concentrate on the dream so as not think about that. Then I get up to start back, but I take one more look over the drop-off and there's a rope of thick pilu grass hanging over a leap ... a great leap beyond it. It wasn't there last night. Is it to lure me to my death in one jump, or is it to help me on my way? and if to help, why do they hang it so far from the last step? But I had said that I would die here, and what better place than with this view of snow-capped needles.

I call upon the sun and wait for it to warm me. I remove my gloves. I will also leave my back pack here so as to be as light as possible. I will even leave my little vest and snake belt. Then I have the idea to take off my boots and leave them, too. It's as if, if I do that, it will be in answer to what the pebbles and boulders of my dream were saying. And of course the boots are heavy. Then I call upon the

sun again, as well as the mountain peaks. I worship the view one last time, my Vilcabamba: up, down, out. I let my heart fill. I think I remember ... yes, I do remember, Grandmother told me I had a heart of gold ... that my heart was like the sun. Guaya, gold! Shall I leap to my death just when I'm remembering words in another ... in the secret language of my birth?

I leap. I touch. I *just* touch the rough fibers of the rope but it is jerked away from me at the last minute. But I'm so light! I'm such a small, thin man! The joints of my fingers and, yes, even my toes ... they're not like the joints of other people's. Have I always known that? My slanted head against the rock as if pressed to a breast, and I cling (*easily!*) like a spider, to the tiny rough places of the cliff. I cling and then I climb. And I know for sure that there is another language. There is Spanish, then Quechua, and then this secret language and these gestures and whistles, these secret other people, they, watching me.

At the top they've left me a pair of sandals that leave the toes free. I put them on and climb down this side as I climbed up that other, over and down and down again, until I drop beneath a false forest planted on platforms. I enter my hidden land. Men, women and children come to me. They're small with thin, strong hands. Six fingers. Noses like the condor's. Their heads are slanted, but I understand now that they were never put to boards. These are their natural heads. These are the people from which the idea came that others tried to imitate, tying up heads, wanting to make themselves and their children more like us. No doubt these people had once roamed all this land before the conquest.

They're singing in that language. *Guaya go. Guaya gocomaditu. Go' comaditu.* Here the Ipa, all in white. They make way for me. They bring me to the once-gold chair, to the once-gold dais, to the once-gold house. *Guaya yaputu.* Gold is gone. *Guaya go' comaditu.* Long live your golden heart. They bring the woman, Woialala. "This is your sister. This is your wife." I understand it. I answer, "*Gatu. Gatu.*" They put a yellow glass bead in the torn hole in my hat. No gold here, yet all is gold. It shines in their eyes and hearts and in the sun. "Go as gold," they tell me. "Go in gold," they tell me, "to the end of your days." ■

# THE BRIDGE

(continued from page 50)

"They get mad when I don't answer. Then the bus driver makes me sit in the last row of the bus."

"Where does she make them sit?" Muck asked.

"Right behind her on the front seat." Ihasha recited the information as if it were a lesson he had learned by rote without understanding. He was too young to have learned hate, but experience makes us quick studies. Muck had learned that when he was a bit player in Hollywood in the early thirties.

"I'm going to speak to the principal today," Simone said. "And I'm going to remind the bus driver how long it took her people to get out of the back rows of buses."

"I don't know why Mary Francis's mother told you," Ihasha said. "I can handle it."

"Not without going to the bathroom," Gabe said. "Not from the back row of the bus."

Muck pushed back his chair and rose. "If you will excuse me..." He would offer unsolicited advice were he to remain in the kitchen. Simone had graduated from school, and Gabe was a highschool teacher. They were not without educational experience.

The backyard still drowsed from the night. Pale mists lingered in the fern beds and shrouded the sea grapes. The leaves of the ixora hedge glistened as if they had been waxed. The hour was a time between. On the plains, his fathers would have waited for such mists to burn away; they would have avoided the cold tears of the night spirits. He felt suspended between those fathers and his nephews. Lost in time, he was a circle caught between beginnings, weakened by distance from both. Sinking cross-legged to sit under the date palm near the fern bed, he watched the new fronds, tight furled but ready to unroll toward the sun. Mist. Water and air. In both—but neither. An interim state. And Ihasha had dreamed him both.

The something that moved in the house on frightened feet was not Gabe and Simone's anger about Ihasha's school as much as his own doubt. Here in this strange but beautiful land, far from the dark forests of his people,

Muck was not sure he could become a part of the endless circles that would return him to his origins. Might not Ihasha, with the clear visions of the young finding their names, be seeing him suspended forever between earth and sky, blown always by the winnowing winds, always lacking the substance of grass?

A vagrant breeze, as cold as if it had come from lands far to the north, rattled the palm fronds and dropped dates in a green rain around Muck. As they bounced off his head and shoulders, he picked one up and turned it over in his knobby fingers. "Poor meatless thing," he said to it. "Pale

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*Here in this  
strange but  
beautiful land,  
Muck was not sure  
he could become a  
part of the  
endless circles  
that would return  
him to his  
origins.*

---

brother to the sea grape, all skin and stone. So beautiful. So useless. But, by the rocks of the ant hills, so potent...."

Simone's shadow fell across his hand as her voice whispered softly through the chill wind. "Would you teach the children today, Uncle? I won't be at the school long."

"I have wanted to teach them to jump at the bridge should they need to go to Wakui...."

"No!" Simone snapped. Then, because she was a good niece, she said, "I am sorry, Uncle. Carises and Clausa are too young. Let them get a little older."

"And Ihasha?" Muck questioned softly. "Is he too young too?"

"You'll have to ask Gabe about that. I gave him to his father."

"Umm," Muck said.

"You know I did, Uncle. On his sixth birthday."

"Umm." Muck examined the date carefully, memorizing it roundness.

"Dammit, Muck," she lashed out. "Why are you doing this to me? Just say what's on your mind instead of playing your little game."

"I thought you might still be binding him to a board since it is you who will speak to his teacher ...." Muck threw the date toward the fern bed and watched it become indistinguishable among the other pale fruits. "The big strawberry, it is said, is so tempting because we do not have to gather it ourselves."

When he turned back to Simone, she was half-way to the house. Her walk was not graceful.

The sun slanting in between the house roof and the date palm had burned the mist away by the time the sound of the car door awakened Muck. He had nodded off, a habit he had fallen into when he did not wish to think about something. Sleep and death and dreams in the womb. Rich coils of decaying plants and rotting fruit rode the wind as a green botfly droned lazily around his head. At first he was not sure where he was, then memory forced awareness. Ihasha was sitting crosslegged in front of him, holding his old baseball and staring into it as Gypsies stare into crystal. Muck arched his shoulders back, then forward, enlacing his fingers and extending his hands palm outward to the full length of his arms. When the knuckles cracked satisfactorily, Ihasha rose with the fluid ease of the young and said, "Mama said come to breakfast."

"I thought I heard the car...."

"That was Dad. Mama didn't go with him. But I'm staying home anyway."

"Umm."

"She said you are going to teach Calusa and Carises to jump at the bridge. She said I can help."

"We'll see."

"And maybe you'll teach me more about pitching?" Ihasha held out the ball, an offering Muck could seldom refuse. Each time he saw it he remembered the day in Chicago when, at twenty-one, he was going to be renowned as a baseball pitcher. He couldn't remember who had hit it into the stands, but Hack Wilson had pitched it. That was in 1926—too late to distinguish himself as a warrior because the last one had been the war to end all wars. By 1941 he was still young enough to fight but old enough to decide being distinguished for killing enemies who had been allies until last month and would probably be allies again wasn't much to be proud of anyway. Muck sighed. He'd just never had the kind of hands Hack Wilson had. So he'd never been distin-

guished as a pitcher either. Matter of fact, about all he'd ever succeeded at was failure. It did look like Ihasha had pitchers' hands, and he took to that old ball so completely that Muck had given it to him on the birthday his training had passed to Gabe. Or at least the birthday Simone said she'd relinquished him.

"Well, will you?" Ihasha's voice was high and sweet, but it had the early timber that said it could have authority one day.

"We'll see."

Simone was wiping up orange juice Carises had spilled when they got to the kitchen. Pouring him another cup, she said, "Now watch it, kid, this stuff doesn't grow on trees." Muck looked at her for a minute as she thought about what she had said. It was like looking into a closed-up telescope, and money was in the heart of it. They chuckled companionably, and Muck knew she had thought carefully about the day. She wasn't mad at him. All she said about school was, "I'd probably have spit in Miss Fleer's eye anyway. At least she could learn to pronounce his name right." Miss Fleer was Ihasha's teacher.

When Muck took the children into the backyard, silence lay on the neighborhood like a restraining hand. Heat had already stilled the birds and dried the surface moisture so even the rich odors were gone.

"We need a big snake, Ihasha," Muck said. "Can you find one?"

The boy looked thoughtful, his face intense as he concentrated on the problem. With that kind of mind set, he might be a remarkable pitcher.

"You used the shovel with me," he said suddenly, smiling at his own victory over time.

"You remember that long ago?" Muck was surprised. Ihasha had been no older than Carises when Muck had taught him the path of ghosts.

"Yes, sir," he flung over his shoulder, for he was already running toward the shed among the sapodilla trees in the corner of the yard.

Muck moved Calusa off the path where the sand was hard packed and set Carises in front of her. Automatically, she placed her hands on his shoulders and held him immobile—or as nearly immobile as a squirming two-year-old can be held. "Unka, Unka, Unka," he said loudly and tried to wriggle free. Calusa was already a good little mother. Scarcely noticing her brother, she leaned on his shoulders and pushed his feet from under him. He sat down with a startled plop

and would have screamed his indignation but she immediately stuck a cracker into his mouth. Simone had trained her daughter well. Carises forgot his anger and concentrated on the cracker.

By the time Muck had found a stick for drawing, Ihasha was back, pulling the long handled shovel behind him. He laid it parallel to the path and sat down by Carises. Almost like a shaman, he produced the baseball and began stretching his index and middle fingers around it.

"We're going to play a game," Muck said to Carises and Calusa. She watched his face politely though her attention was centered on Carises. She had knelt behind him and, with the pressure exerted by the forward angle of her frail body, she kept him pinned to the ground.

At the word "game," he quit squirming and looked interested. "Game," he echoed, clapping his fat hands.

"Yes, game," Muck said, drawing a great circle in the hard-packed sand. "But it's a lesson too, so listen with both ears, little buffalo."

"Buffawo, buffawo," Carises shouted, straining upward.

Calusa leaned forward harder and tightened her hands. "Hush," she said

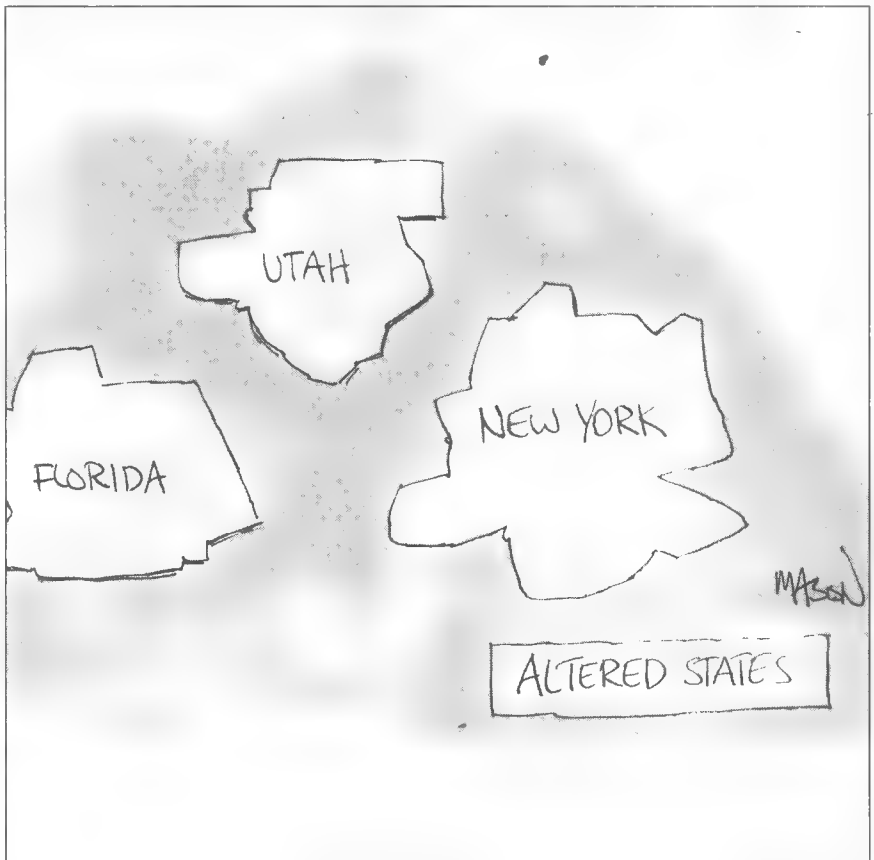
sharply. "Uncle is talking."

"We'll play buffalo later," Muck promised Carises who had stopped shouting when he heard the words 'Uncle is talking.' Simone had trained the children to respond to those words as puppies are trained to respond to "sit" and "stay." She was a good mother. "Right now we're going to play Path of the Ghosts."

Muck leaned forward and, with his stick, retraced the circle he had drawn from one side of the path to the other. "This is everything everywhere. Father Sun is in this circle." He poked the stick into the sand in the upper half of the circle. "Grandmother Moon is in this circle." He poked the stick into the bottom half. "All the stars are in this circle. Everything you can see and everything you cannot see is in this circle." The fast-moving stick held even Carises' attention as the words repeated their circles. "And here," Muck said, drawing a circle in the middle of the great circle, "is Mother Earth."

Finally, Calusa was drawn into the words. "Where we are, Uncle?" she asked, and Muck knew the time was good, for little girls listen politely to elders but they listen for that which is immediately useful.

"We are right there," he said jabbing the stick into the center of the





# THE BRIDGE

smaller circle with each word. "We are always in the center of the circle because everything is equally far out there," and he swept the horizon with the stick, "from us."

Calusa had not moved her eyes from the four dots in the middle of the inner circle. "Which one am I, Uncle?" she asked.

"This one." He put the stick into one of the holes. "And this is your life," he said, drawing a straight line to upper left edge of the inner circle. "If you walk a straight path, you and your ghosts will come to the end of your life on Earth one day and your spirit will take the path to the bridge."

Calusa looked around the yard. "Where is my ghost now, Uncle?" she asked softly.

Muck looked at Ihasha, hoping he

could tell his sister.

As if he had been waiting for a chance to recite, Ihasha said, "It's inside you." Then his face became thoughtful. "And there is one inside Carises and mine is inside me. And ..." he bit his lip and frowned, "your spirit's in there too but it's out here..." Looking to Muck, Ihasha said, "It's everywhere but you can't see it ever."

"Can I see my ghost?" Calusa asked, the concrete image obviously more interesting to her.

Muck waited. Ihasha thought for a minute. "Nope. At least, I don't think so?" he stated the question. Muck nodded curtly. "But you can see mine sometimes," Ihasha announced triumphantly.

"When?" Calusa challenged. "When can I see it?"

"Any time you want," Ihasha said confidently. "Just close your eyes and you can see it on the inside of your eyelids." He let his breath out with a whoosh.

Calusa closed her eyes and her face became tense. Shortly, she opened her eyes and smiled. "I could. And

Uncle Muck. And Carises too." She pushed down on his shoulders for he was beginning to squirm again. "But not me. I couldn't see my ghost."

"Oh, but it's there, little mother," Muck assured her. "It's always there. We can see it. And it is as pretty as you are."

Carises squirmed again. "And yours, little buffalo," Muck said, "yours is getting very impatient. You have to watch that." He chuckled. "It causes you to go off into the desert." Still chuckling, he drew small lines like veins in a leaf off each side of the path.

"Why do you have to watch that, Uncle?" Ihasha asked, his small face so serious Muck felt a little foolish for having chuckled.

"It makes you lose sight of your goal. And, if you get far enough into the desert, you might never get back on the path that takes you to the good death."

"Like forgetting your homework?" Ihasha asked.

"Umm." Muck wasn't sure what his nephew had in mind.

"I mean you have to go back and get it while the whole bus waits."

"Like that," Muck said.

He wasn't sure it was like that until Ihasha said, "Everybody gets mad at you and nothing goes right all day. You just keep doing dumb things."

"Just like that," Muck chuckled again. "That's when you know you should have stayed in bed."

"Mama wouldn't let him," Calusa said with a pious expression. "Sometimes he tries..."

"That's one thing mamas do," Muck interrupted. "You'll have to help your children stay on the straight path too, little mother."

"Oh," Calusa said. She obviously wasn't sure she liked the way the conversation was going. "What happens when you get to the end of your life?" she asked.

"Well, little sly fox," Muck touched the back of her head approvingly, "that's where the spirit path starts." He continued the line beyond the circle of Earth. "You leave your body and ghost here," tapping the line of Earth, "and your spirit goes on along this path until it passes a ripe, juicy strawberry as big as a house." As he spoke, he drew a strawberry to the left of the path.

"Strawberry," Calusa and Carises said together almost drooling the word.

"Oh, you don't want to eat this one," Ihasha said quickly.

"Stwabewy, stwabewy," Carises gurgled.



*For the last time, Regan, there's nothing under your bed!*

"Do too," Calusa said defiantly.

"No you don't. Does she, Uncle Muck?" Ihasha sought support from the authority. Elders know everything. Muck smiled. If children only knew how much elders fake!

"No, little mother, you don't want to eat this one. A Matchi-Manitou owns the strawberry and he will try to tempt you to eat it. And, if you do, your spirit will just become mist and never get to join The Mystery. He's like a strange man who tries to tempt little children into cars with candy. You run past such evil spirits as faaaast as you can go." Muck spread his fingers and drew his hand rapidly along the word in the air.

"Wun, wun," Carises burred, trying to escape Calusa's restraining hands.

"Soon, little buffalo, soon," Muck said. "But first, you come to the river." He drew two lines across the end of the path so it ended at the river's edge. "You have to get across it and there's only one way."

"You have to jump at the bridge," Ihasha said. Muck looked at the sweet young face, so serious, so intent. Ihasha's voice seemed old and wise in its acceptance. Perhaps not a thing to be understood or believed, jumping at the bridge was something to be accepted, something to be done. A fleeting picture of smoke rising above the trees and a creek in a meadow flashed into Muck's mind and was, as quickly, gone. An old man on the far bank of the creek beckoned...

"Jump, jump," Carises shouted.

"Yes, impatient calf, you must learn to jump," Muck drew in the final lines. "This is a great snake," he said. "It will be facing you, its head not quite reaching the shore where you stand, its tail stretching around the curve of The Mystery so you can not see the end of it."

"What kind, Uncle?" Calusa asked, her femaleness asserting itself. "Little grass snake? Big black snake?" Both kinds lived in the yard and, like lightning on the land, frequently zig-zagged through the grass and into the fern bed. Simone had taught the children to respect them as the words of the Thunderers made flesh.

"Oh, black, little mother, for its head is as large as a shovel, giving you a solid place to land." Muck dropped his stick by the path and took Carises by the hand, relieving Calusa. "Now, little ones," he said, "it is time to practice jumping."

Carises was already jumping, his chubby legs drawing up under him like

rubber as he pulled on Muck's hand for leverage. "Patience, little brother, patience," Muck cautioned. "Do not waste your energies. You will need them at the bridge. Ihasha," he ordered, "you be the movement."

Ihasha lifted the shovel from the grass and, standing a good way back for the shovel was almost twice as long as he was tall, laid it across the path, its scoop upside down in the middle of the walk.

"You be first, little mother," Muck said. "Go over to the fern bed and start walking this way. The shrimp plant will be the big strawberry. When you pass it, you see the Matchi-



Manitou and you start running. This is the edge of the water, so you jump to the head of the snake and balance on its body until you get to the end. If you fall off—well, just try not to fall off."

Caught up in the game, Calusa was moving to the fern bed before Muck had finished. Carises was straining to be free, but Muck held his fat hand tight.

"Here I come," Calusa announced, self-importantly, and started sauntering toward the shrimp plant. Completely caught up in the play acting, she ignored it until she drew even with it, then she stopped, looked longingly at it, licked her lips, tossed her head in dismissal, and began to run as fast as her straight little legs would go.

Muck glanced at Ihasha who, sitting on his heels with both hands on the end of the shovel handle, watched Calusa intently. She ran to the edge of the path and, pausing momentarily, jumped flat-footed at the scoop. She would have landed square on top of it, but, at almost the last moment, Ihasha moved it to the left so her foot touched just the edge and slid down the

smooth metal. She was so unprepared that, as her foot touched the path, she fell sideways and lay surprised but unhurt in the soft sand.

"You're a toad; you're a toad," Ihasha shouted happily and jiggled the shovel rapidly.

"Am not," Calusa said angrily as she pushed herself to her feet and brushed herself off indignantly.

"I'm afraid you are, little mother," Muck said softly, smoothing her hair. "When we fall into the river, we become toads that have to spend forever trying to get out of those shapes so they can go into The Mystery."

"You're a toad. You're a toad," Ihasha shouted again.

Carises took up the word and shouted with Ihasha, "Toad, toad."

Calusa's face began to twist and contort. In a minute she would be weeping. "It's not fair," she cried, "You moved the snake's head."

"No, I didn't," Ihasha denied. "The snake moved its head. It doesn't want you to land on it."

Calusa glared at the shovel before turning to Muck. "Is that so?" she demanded angrily.

"I fear it is so," Muck said gently. "Even in death things do not come easy."

"That's not fair," she screamed. "That's not fair at all."

"Oh, it is fair all right, little one," Muck assured her. "It is fair because..." He turned to Ihasha, "Do you know why it is fair, little brother?"

For a long moment, Ihasha looked doubtful. The doubt began to fade and puzzlement filled the planes of his cheeks. Finally, thoughtfulness replaced it and a radiant smile lighted his face. "The snake doesn't play favorites. It gives everyone the same chance." He did not even look to Muck for confirmation; it was apparent he was satisfied with his answer.

"It still isn't fair," Calusa said hotly. "Carises is only a baby. He can't even jump that far yet."

"Well, let us see, child," Muck said and, turning, led Carises back to the fern bed. "Now, little one," he said to the baby, "we are going to run. Then we're going to jump." Carises was already pulling at Muck's arm.

Moving quickly so Carises' fat little legs could churn along at their fastest, Muck steadied him to the path and said, "Jump." At the same time, Ihasha moved the shovel toward Carises. Muck steadied him as he jumped the short distance and landed with both feet planted squarely on the scoop, for Ihasha had adjusted it even as Carises

# THE BRIDGE

was in the air. Still steadying him, Muck helped him walk the shovel handle until they reached the end and he could step off onto the grass.

"You helped him," Calusa accused. "It's all right because he's a baby, but you still helped him."

"I only showed him how, little mother. He must learn to steady himself. He must learn to walk the snake by himself. He must practice until he is ready to jump at the bridge safely when it is time for his spirit to rejoin The Mystery."

"Can I try again?" Calusa asked.

"And again and again and again. Today and tomorrow and all of the rest of your life," Muck assured her. Turning to Ihasha, he said, "Practice for a while with the small ones. I will go have some coffee and later we will practice with the ball."

In the kitchen, Simone was making sandwiches. The morning had gone rapidly as it always did when he was teaching the children. "So much for the dead," he said. "Got some coffee for the almost living?"

Simone chuckled as she poured coffee; the chuckle became a little girl giggle as she set it before him. "You know, Uncle," she said, "you're an old fraud."

"Watch your mouth, daughter," he said. "You're talking to the old fraud who's just taught the new Fay Wray to turn a Matchi-Manitou into a strawberry King Kong with a bag of penny candy."

"That's what I mean," Simone touched Muck's cheek lightly. "You're a pried piper, a trickster, a teacher, an old ham, a coach, everything a child has no defenses against. I wanted to come out there and jump at the bridge and show off the way I did when you taught me the path to Wakui another world ago."

"I could have used the help, daughter."

"That's also what I mean," Simone leaned down and hugged him warmly. "You'd have made me feel useful while I was making a pain of myself. How'd you get so smart?"

As she walked to the back door to call the children to lunch, Simone was again Loon Song, the graceful bird on water. Muck smiled at his own percep-

tions and, to himself, said, "Umm."

After lunch, while the young ones were taking their naps, Muck and Ihasha returned to the yard.

"You have the ball?" Muck asked.

Ihasha held it up, his ring and little fingers folded onto his palm.

"Why do you hold the ball so?" Muck asked. He could see Hack Wilson's hand holding the ball that same way almost sixty years ago.

"Could it want to be held so, Uncle?"

"Ummm." Medicine has been known to exist in a child's bath toy. He had read that in an article Gabe had found about medicine bundles.

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*"If you walk a straight path," said Muck, "you and your ghosts will come to the end of your life on Earth one day and your spirit will take the path to the bridge . . ."*

---

The article had been written by a Pharisee anthropologist.

"Well could it?" Ihasha demanded.

"If a rubber duck can want to swim, that ball can want to be held in a Boy Scout grip. Play ball!" Muck was laughing so hard he almost missed the first pitch. For a little man, Ihasha could burn it in right smartly.

They worked for the next hour with time out while Muck explained catcher's signals. Ihasha was not sure he liked the catcher's making decisions about what the pitcher should do. "If he calls the ball, how can the pitcher get a no-hitter, Uncle?"

"He has to be good," Muck said. "But getting a no-hitter isn't the most important part of the game. The worst hitter will connect at least one-fifth of the time while the best will miss two out of three."

"Well, what's more important than getting a no-hitter then, Uncle?" Ihasha asked, puzzled.

"Winning is. And that takes place the whole team," Muck said softly. "Remember this, nephew: the pitcher can see only the batter. The catcher can see everyone. It's usually better to let the

one who can see the big picture call the shots."

"Umm."

When Muck's shoulders began to tighten up and he realized he was going to be sore the next day, he said, "That's enough for today," but he was thinking, "Game called because of pain."

They sat in the grass by the side of the diagram. Ihasha was looking at the circles on the path and practicing gripping the ball. "I guess that's the really big picture, huh, Uncle?"

"You could say that, Ihasha." The boy continued to amaze him.

"If everything is in The Mystery, Uncle," Ihasha asked suddenly, "where in the big circle is god?"

"Then you think he is there?"

"He has to be there, doesn't he?" Ihasha asked, his brow furrowed in concentration.

"What makes you think that?" Muck asked. He wasn't sure god *has* to be anywhere though he had been taught that all his life.

"It says so on money."

"Umm."

"Everyone at school says god is everywhere watching and listening."

"Ummm."

"So he has to be there somewhere. You said belief is medicine. A lot of people believe god is there."

"Just like a rubber duck," Muck said.

"And a ball?" Ihasha asked.

"And a ball," Muck agreed. "You just might make a powerful lawyer, boy."

"I wouldn't like that, Uncle."

"If you ever become a Christian . . ."

"I said I believe god has to be there," Ihasha said emphatically. "I still don't believe in him."

"Umm."

"Do you, Uncle Muck?" Ihasha asked unexpectedly.

It would be impossible to say he did not, for he had once said he did when the teachers and the preacher worked together for that statement and refused to let up. Had he been sure, Muck felt, nothing could have made him say anything.

"Would it make a difference if I do?" Muck asked. "I mean, would you feel you have to because I do?"

"I already said I don't."

"You did say you believe he exists."

"Well, sure," Ihasha said patiently. "Gitchee Manitou is everything everywhere; so, god has to be in The Great Holy Mystery."

"Why?" Muck was not sure he understood Ihasha's reasoning. He wasn't

even sure he *could* understand it.

"That much medicine would make him exist even if he didn't. The Mystery is all the medicine, isn't it?"

"That is what my uncles taught me. That is what I believe."

"Well, all the people that do believe in god make a lot of medicine. Put all their medicine together and god has to exist."

"So god is in The Mystery. You believe he exists but you don't believe in god?"

"Yes, sir."

"But you don't doubt he exists?"

"No, sir."

"Then why are you having trouble at school?" Muck thought he understood Ihasha's reasoning, but he knew he did not understand Ihasha's reason for refusing to say that to his classmates.

"Because I won't say I believe in god," Ihasha's voice betrayed an impatience he was obviously trying to conceal. And Muck suddenly realized the subtle distinction Ihasha was making, a distinction that made a great deal of sense to Muck, one that, had he made it himself all those years ago, might have made all the difference between succeeding and failing at so many things.

"I see," he said.

"Why are they that way, Uncle?" Ihasha might have come to grips with the infinite, but the concrete was more complex for him.

"Because they're people," Muck answered sadly.

After supper, Muck sat in the backyard and watched the sunset. He was so close to becoming a part of it now that he wanted to store up all the sensations he may have missed as color and form came out of vapor and distortion. It would be easier if things were what they seem.

Gabe spoke beside him. "Pretty, isn't it?"

"Like an article of faith, as the chaplain used to say at school," Muck said.

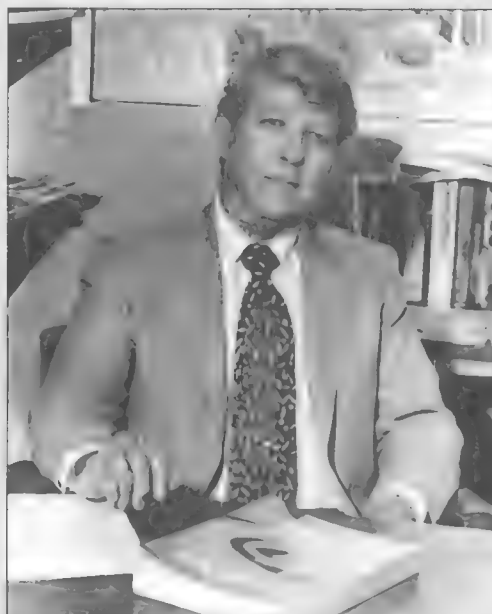
"It would be nice to believe something that way," Gabe said wistfully. "Beats having to train all your life to jump at the bridge."

"It would make it easier to raise little Ojibwas too," Muck said. "Say the words—abracadabra, I agree—and (poof!) no more conflict."

"Uncle..."

Muck waited, careful not to turn, not to look at Gabe. The timorous pause, the swallowed words after the invocation of authority indicated the

## Thomas E. Sanders (Nippawanock)



### *The Great Holy Mystery*

"There is spirit in everything," says author Thomas E. Sanders (Nippawanock). "There is nothing that does *not* have spirit, but nothing has a spirit. The Great Holy Mystery (which the white man called The Great Spirit) is all-spirit from which everything draws its power or medicine."

Sanders, a Cherokee/Narragansett Indian, has been writing about Native America for the past twenty years. He and his brother (Walter Peek—Metacomet) are the authors of *Literature of the American Indian* (Glencoe Press, 1973). A professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Sanders teaches both "transplant" and Native American literature.

And, apart from research, how does he find his material? "My past," he says. "I grew up in a house with a traditional Cherokee father and a Christian Cherokee mother. As a result, I vacillated between two fundamental beliefs, subsequently abandoning the one alien to this hemisphere."

"I believe in the concept of the Great Holy Mystery," says Sanders, explaining further that animistic Native Americans believe they are of three elements: the *physical body* which is born of and returns to the land, the *ghost* (all memory of land in the corporeal body released and tied to the land at dissolution of the body), and *spirit* which animates the body.

"When I die," he says, "my body will return to grass; animating spirit

(no longer localized) will diffuse, like a raindrop losing identity as it falls into the ocean, back into The Mystery. My ghost will remain tied to the land, capable of regaining corporeality should its services be needed if the male population of my people is decimated by war or disease."

Sanders feels there is a "chronic" rekindling of interest in American Indian belief. "Transplant Americans are always looking for the mystical experience. Since their arrival in this hemisphere, they have been trying to find something to solidify their religious beliefs." He says this is possibly a result of economic confusion or collective guilt. "When man encounters unconquerable fears, he tends to turn to religion for comfort." According to Sanders, "Judeo-Christianity has failed Americans and they are seeking to understand Native American and other religious beliefs that might coalesce into one viable religion for their polarized world."

"Mother Earth is a strong force in the Native American religious system," says Sanders, "because everything must come from something. For us, that *something* is the Earth. She is our mother. She nurtures us, and, in turn, we must respect and nurture her. However, for many Indians, living with our traditional beliefs in today's technological society creates a conflict. We are caught between our spiritual needs and the economic demands of a white society."



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doubt, the confusion Muck knew his nephew had lived with all day.

"We have this problem with Ihasha..." Again Gabe fell silent.

A Mayfly riding the wind at the edge of the fern bed shimmered, its wings like mica in the evening light. A small stone at the base of the fern moved gently and sprang into the air, catching the insect in its toothless mouth. As the toad moved back into the protecting ferns, the diaphanous wings of the ephemerid fluttered once and were gone as the toad swallowed.

"I guess Simone told you..."

"Ummm."

"Well, maybe she didn't tell you all of it..." Gabe shifted beside Muck. Sitting on his heels, his arms around his knees, Gabe was a stone in the dying light. But the serenity of toads was not on him. "The kids are giving Ihasha a hard time because he has long hair, the bus driver is blam-

ing him for trouble other kids are making on the bus, and his teacher is calling him everything but Ihasha."

"Umm." Muck looked for the toad in the fern bed, but it had camouflaged itself once again and returned to earth.

"We thought talking to the principal, to Ihasha's teacher..." Gabe's voice faded again.

The evening sounds should have been companionable and comforting. They weren't.

Finally: "Well, what would you do?"

Muck felt a little like the Mayfly. He had not anticipated the question. He was still waiting to hear Gabe and Simone's decision.

"Ummm," Muck said, but he knew Gabe would wait. He had to say something.

The shadows were growing longer and darker in the fern bed. One of them moved, lifted, and hopped away into the grass. Ephemera wings glistened in the dung the toad left behind.

"I don't think I'd do anything," Muck said at last.

"Nothing?" Gabe's voice revealed his surprise and his disappointment.

"Nope," Muck followed the pro-

gress of the toad until it was lost in the dusk. "Ball player named Gates Brown once said something about doing nothing. He said, 'If you don't swing at bad pitches, they have to throw you a good one—or let you walk.' I guess I'd just let Ihasha learn when to swing and when to walk."

Gabe unfolded himself and stood looking down at Muck. As he turned to go back to the house, he spread his fingers and jerked his hands as if to catch something he had missed. "Sometimes you can be a real stereotype, Muck," he said.

"Ummm."

Sometimes Pharisees weren't the only ones who could be a pain in the ass.

Nothing more was said—at least in Muck's presence—about Ihasha's problem. The boy seemed satisfied to go to school, to do his homework, to practice pitching in the evening. If Gabe and Simone did anything, they didn't tell him about it.

The days ran on pleasantly; the nights lengthened. Ihasha said no more about his dreams, and Muck preferred not to remind him of them. Sometimes Muck thought the shape near his bed in the hours before hearth heating was gathering itself into a ball, was tensing. But morning continued to come, Simone continued to ask, "Did you sleep well, Uncle?" and the little ones continued to practice jumping at the bridge.

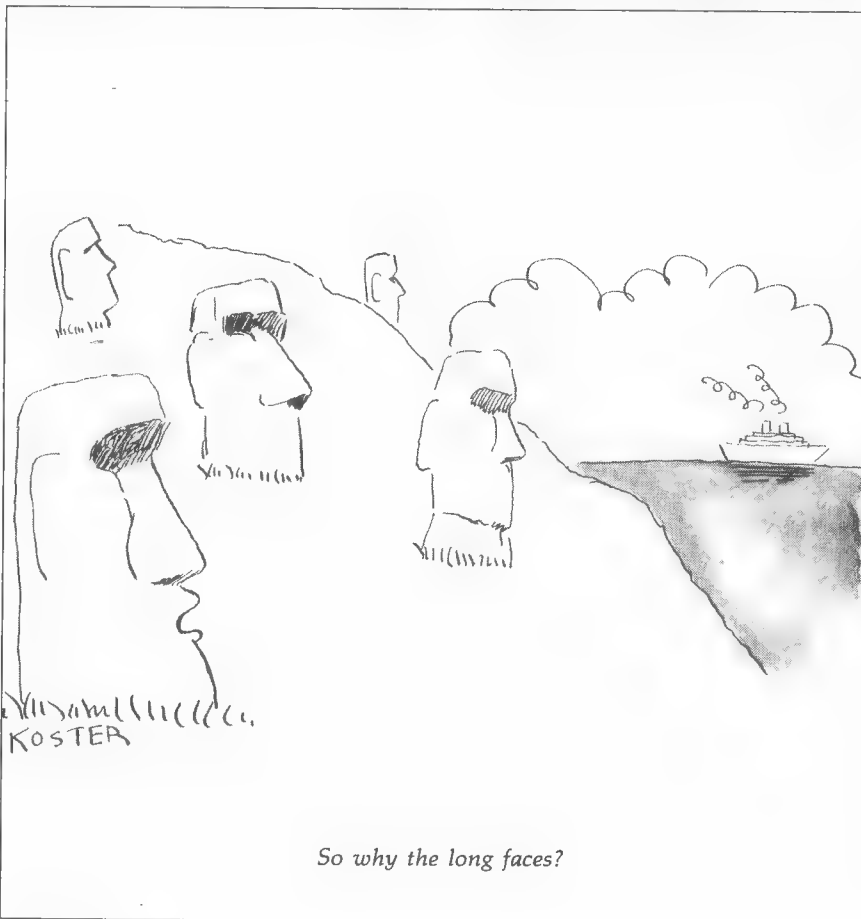
Calusa, with the grace of a young bird, had learned to watch the movement of the shovel as Muck manipulated it, to twist and turn and almost always land squarely on it, feet planted so firmly that reasonable movement could not dislodge her. Carises, his chubby legs growing daily more powerful, was making the leap more successfully all the time. With the innate teaching skill of females, Calusa was steadying him less and less, though she slackened off so gradually Carises did not seem to notice he was achieving more and more by himself.

And one evening at supper, Ihasha announced he was going to pitch for his ball team in the park on Saturday.

"What ball team?" Simone asked, grease dripping from the spatula in her hand as, surprised, she turned from the stove and stood staring at her son.

"The kids at school," he said in that off-hand way the young have of making the very important sound trivial.

"What kids?" Gabe asked impa-



*So why the long faces?*

tiently, obviously equally surprised.

"The kids in my class. You know — Jamie and Keith and Jesus and Fred..."

"Jesus?" Muck was surprised at the strident sound of his own voice as the question exploded from his lips.

"His name's Hay-soos but it looks like Jesus."

"Umm."

"What does the teacher call *him*?" Simone asked.

"Jesus," Ihasha said with a shrug. "Just like everyone else."

"And what's she calling *you* these days?" Gabe asked, his voice ready for instant resentment.

"Hash," Ihasha answered, pushing back his chair. "Just like everyone else. May I be excused?" and, sweeping his catcher's mitt and ball off the counter, he was out the back door before any more questions could be asked.

Simone began wiping up grease with a paper towel. Carises was spilling milk and Calusa was trying to wrestle the cup out of his fat hands. Gabe leaned back in his chair, then tipped it all the way back onto two legs, a habit that always annoyed Simone. "Well, what about that?" he said.

"I wonder what happened," Simone said, dropping grease on the floor again.

Gabe looked at Muck. "Good pitch or walk?" he asked.

"Umm."

When Muck and Gabe went into the backyard, Ihasha was throwing the ball at the three nails Muck had driven into the date palm—one high, one low, one ball. "Will you catch for me, Dad?" he asked.

Baseball had never been one of Gabe's sports, but he could drop into that catcher's crouch that Muck's old bones resisted.

The first few throws were easy warm-ups; then, backing up, Ihasha began to put a little moxie on them. "Hey, that stings," Gabe said after a particularly nice one. "For a little guy, you put a lot of fire on that ball."

Ihasha smiled and looked to Muck. "Would you signal pitches, Uncle?"

"You don't want to work out your own game plan?" Muck asked, moving behind Gabe to where the umpire would normally stand.

"Like you said, I can't see the big picture," Ihasha answered. "Besides, I don't think I should have a game plan."

Muck looked at Ihasha narrowly. Laziness? Instinct? Logic? What was his

nephew thinking?

"Any reason, Son?" Gabe asked.

"I don't know, Dad," he said after a short silence. Then, looking at Muck for confirmation, he asked. "Shouldn't I know what to do after I've seen how the last pitch went?"

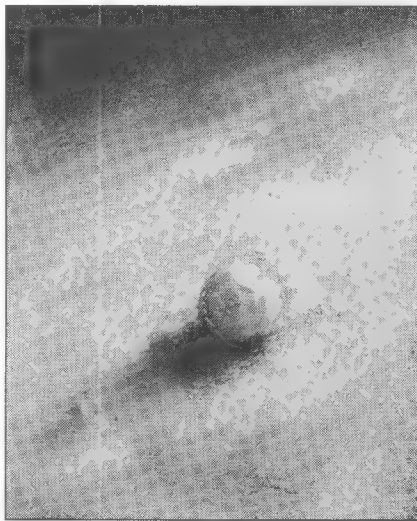
"That's the way the real pitchers do it," Muck assured him.

"Does that mean they don't have any plan at all?" Gabe asked.

Muck thought for a minute. Ihasha was waiting for the answer too.

"Not really, Nephew," Muck finally said. "you make lesson plans..."

"Yes," Gabe said quickly, almost as if he were pleased to see an analogy



between Ihasha's interest and his.

"Why?"

"County rule," Gabe answered quickly. Then, "And they organize my thinking."

"Always use them?"

"No." Gabe sounded shocked—as if he were surprised Muck might even think the answer would be yes. "Until you see how a class is going, you can't really decide. Sometimes the lesson plan works, but most times it doesn't. The kids are not always ready for something, or they are interested in something that has no relation to what you had planned. You get the feel of the class and go with that. You're there to teach, not to follow a plan..." Gabe stopped, looked thoughtful, and smiled broadly. "Well, I'll be damned."

Saturday morning, Muck knew, on waking, that he had been benched for the day. The hard part was explaining to Ihasha.

"Some days you play, some you watch, and some you stay in the tipi," he told his nephew. "I've got a little contest going here, but I'll know how you're doing. And I'll wait for you to

tell me what you did right."

Gabe came into Muck's bedroom before they left for the park. "Will you be all right, Uncle?" he asked. "I could stay here..."

"I will not be alone, Nephew," Muck said. The dim shape stood very near the bed now.

"Who..." Gabe began.

"No one you know yet," Muck assured him. "You go on. We will be here when you get back."

As he listened to the car pulling out of driveway, Muck looked at the shadow. "I will be here when they get back," he said.

The afternoon was long in its passing. Pain seems less formidable at night or on gloomy days. Sunshine, with its warmth, its promise of life, seems calculating and cruel as the passing golden hours serve only to remind us "yet a few days and thee the all-beholding sun shall see no more in all his course." "That kid was sick," Muck said to the shadow. "He should have been playing ball and thinking about living..." He swung his feet off the bed and sat up. "This is just not a good day for dying." The shadow seemed to waver, to grow dimmer. "Hell," Muck moved toward it and jabbed his finger into it. "No day is, as a matter of fact. Whoever came up with that idea had been reading too much *Shorman*." The cold spot warmed as Muck stabbed it with his finger. And then the shadow was gone. Muck dressed and went to the kitchen for coffee.

His left arm ached as he lifted the cup, and he found himself using his right hand to do familiar things. Shaving was a clumsy undertaking and he spilled talcum on the floor. As he got down to wipe it up, his bones cried out against the tile beneath his knees. Looking at his face in the mirror, seeing the reflected pain, he assured it. "You are in your final inning, old companion. It's back to grass with you too one of these days." The powder accentuated the deep set eyes, glowed in the steamy mirror. Muck washed it off. "Time enough to see my own ghost," he said.

Sitting with his back against the date palm, Muck let the sun warm his joints and flush his face. He could feel the pink glow. "Gonna freckle," he said. Then, laughing, he added, "Or spot. Hey, Liver, how will I know?"

Pain in his left arm was spreading like circles from a tossed stone across the depths of his chest. A shadow drifted between him and the sun, but

# THE BRIDGE

it glimmered away under the hail of dates he threw inexpertly at it with his right hand.

And then the children exploded through the back door, their laughter warmer than any sun. Carises ran crookedly down the path and fell into Muck's arms, bringing the pain up sharply. Calusa was on her brother almost immediately, pulling him away, saying sternly, "Be careful, dummy; Uncle's old."

Ignoring her, trying to pull away to hurl himself at Muck again, Carises was shouting, "Wonunka, wonunka," and Ihasha, looking proud, was nodding confirmation.

"One to nothing," he said quietly.

Muck smiled. That score usually meant both pitchers were doing their jobs. "How did you do?" he asked.

"We were pitching better than we were playing," Ihasha said thoughtfully.

Gabe, all smiles and plainly pleased with his son, said quickly, "Hey, Hash, you were pitching better than they were playing."

"Dink was pitching just as good. Everybody was hitting ahead of the slowballs and behind the curves."

"Yeah, but when you put that last one away..." Gabe was determined his son had been a star.

"He was gonna wait for a power play, Dad, no matter what I threw. He had his game plan and he wasn't about to sacrifice just so his team would win. If he'da bunted like Jesus..."

Simone was calling from the kitchen, and the children wandered in for the fried chicken treat from the Colonel.

Muck watched Ihasha's thin back, tired but proud in the shoulders, as the boy followed his brother and sister into the house.

"You'd have been proud, Uncle," Gabe said, dropping down by Muck. "I had no idea he could handle the ball that way."

"Umm."

"He's really frail, you know. In the eighth inning, you could see he was all in, but he just kept going, kept concentrating..."

Muck couldn't keep the approval out of his "umm."

"And the kids kept cheering, and Miss Fleer forgot herself and screamed, 'Give 'em hell, Hash.' After the game, she spoke with us for a minute. She said, 'Ihasha is a determined young man. He'll go far.' Simone said, 'You like Ihasha!' And Miss Fleer said, 'Maybe more than some of the others.' Simone said, 'Then, why don't you call him by his name?' And Miss Fleer said, 'Hey, Mrs. Horn, Hash is his name. He's earned it. The kids gave it to him because he makes hash out of the other team's batters.'" Gabe

*Ihasha leaned against the bed, held out the ball with his left hand. "Would you sleep with it tonight, Uncle? I would like it to have all your medicine it can get."*

paused, out of breath and thoughtful. After a minute, he said, "Let's get in there before the chicken disappears as fast as Simone's anger did."

"What did Simone say?" Muck asked, getting slowly to his feet and walking painfully by Gabe's side toward the house.

Gabe laughed. "She just watched Miss Fleer walk away, then she said, 'You know, it's real pain in the ass when a Pharisee cuts through your shit that way.'"

The children came into Muck's bedroom to say goodnight, for the circles in his chest, having reached their outer limit, were flowing back into their origin. As they grew smaller and smaller, they were becoming tighter and tighter. Soon they would drop into the waters of The Mystery and disappear into its vastness. Unwilling for the family to see his pain, Muck had retired early. As he swung his feet into the bed and covered them with the sheet, he saw the deepening shadow now touching the corner of the bed.

"I hope you have laid out your

best strawberry, O Matchi One," he said. "Today has held many satisfying ones."

The shadow encroached on the corner and intensified the pattern of the quilt at the foot of the bed.

At the knock on the door, the shadow dimmed and, as the children flowed in on their circles of laughter, retreated again. Carises, his arms flailing, moved through the shadow which seemed to waver in the currents of air created by his passing. "Unka, Unka," he bubbled and, throwing his arms up, allowed himself to be gathered in for one final embrace. His kiss was wet and sweet on Muck's cheek. As he turned away, Muck looked from him to the shadow and said, "See?"

Calusa's kiss was perfunctory as she turned from ritual to duty and restrained her younger brother who was plunging toward a collision with the door.

"See?" said Muck smugly.

Ihasha came forward to lean against the bed, put one arm across Muck's shoulder, and hold out Hack Wilson's ball with his left hand. "Would you sleep with it tonight, Uncle?" he asked, his sweet face serious. "I would like it to have all of your medicine it can get."

Muck took the ball with his right hand and, making a great show of the action, screwed it into his left. "I'll pour everything I've got into it," he promised.

"Okay, off to bed with all of you," Simone said from the doorway. "Goodnight, Uncle," she said, turning away, only to turn back immediately and come to the side of the bed. "Is it dark in here?" she asked, looking around.

"Umm," Muck said carefully.

"I'll have Gabe put in a brighter bulb tomorrow," she said as she leaned over and smoothed the cover at the foot of the bed. "And this needs washing. It's dingy."

"Tomorrow, Mother," Muck said without thinking. "Tomorrow."

Simone looked at him through narrowed eyes. "Mother?" she asked hesitantly.

Muck pursed his lips to say "Umm" but changed his mind. Opening his arms wide, he waited for her to kneel by the side of the bed. Then, hugging her tightly, he kissed her cheek. "Every inch," he told her. "Every inch."

As she stood up, she wiped away a tear that was coursing down one cheek. "Is there anything else you need?" she asked.

"No, thank you," Muck said, grip-

ing Ihasha's ball to ward off the pain in his shoulder. "Nothing."

From the bedroom door, Gabe said, "Simone, Carises has cut his lip. Where's the iodine?"

"I'll get it," she said, moving past him quickly. "You say goodnight to Uncle."

"I was hoping she would," Gabe said as he came into the room. "I hate it when he cries." Sitting on the side of the bed, he looked at the ball in Muck's hand. "Ihasha hardly ever turns that old ball loose. How come he left it in here?"

"Power play," Muck said lightly.

"As in medicine ball?" Gabe bantered.

"Well, if a duck..." Muck pronounced the words that sent them into companionable laughter.

When they had subsided, Gabe said seriously. "You really would have been proud of Ihasha today. He was good out there. When his friends did something dumb, he didn't get angry. When they did something right, he let them know he thought so ... he was a real star, but it was like he didn't know it."

"Sounds good," Muck said.

"In a way," Gabe said thoughtfully, "it was like being the leader of a war party in the old days. He really did want to win, but that wasn't as important as his technique." Gabe fell silent, fell thoughtful. Finally he asked, "Do you suppose 'Let's count coup' and 'It isn't if you win or lose but how you play the game' mean the same thing?"

"Umm."

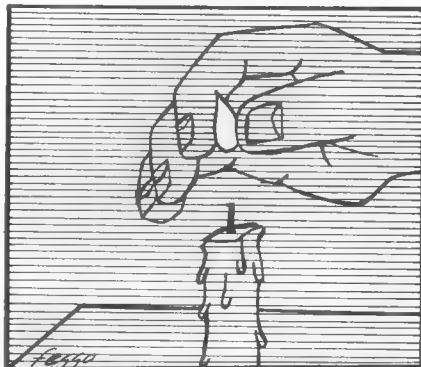
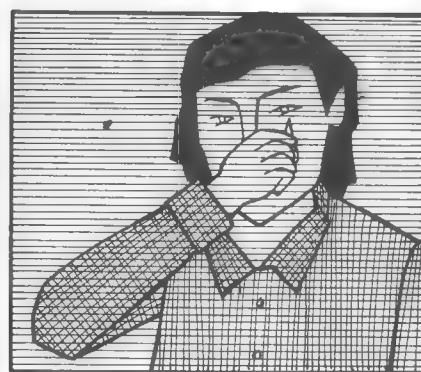
Gabe reached out to touch Muck's leg and give it a squeeze. "I think you told me that my first year in college," he said smiling. "How come I hear it for the first time from my son? Goodnight, Uncle." At the door, Gabe turned, "Do you want this light out?"

"Umm."

Lying in the dark, squeezing the ball, Muck watched the shadow deepen as it began to cover the bed. Somewhere beyond it, a pale red began to form and, beyond it, a length of movement. A spasm of pain almost caused him to drop the ball, but he held it fast and the pain passed. Breathing heavily, he moved toward the center of the bed, staring straight ahead. The coldness that moved upward with the shadow had reached Muck's hands by the time he had himself positioned, his gaze fixed. As he screwed Hash's ball more firmly into his left hand, all pain went out of his chest. His legs lost their thin leadenness; his breathing became deep and controlled. Suddenly,

it seemed, he was striding through the blackness as easily, as happily as he had once strode through the night toward the rocks where Moon Flower awaited him. As the darkness became bright red on his left, he remembered the way Calusa had tossed her head as she began her run for the bridge. Dismissing even the desire to look to his left, like one who has had his fill and

become sick of a temptation, Muck felt his legs tighten for running, lengthen and strengthen as they lifted him above the billowing white beneath him and carried him toward the darkness beyond. Then, like an athlete who, because the stakes are so high, knows best how well he is performing, Muck gathered himself for the jump, knowing, for a certainty, he would make it. ■





# PAMELA'S GET

(continued from page 61)

est. He drove Pamela's mom straight into the most expensive lunatic asylum in town. She died there." He saluted something imaginary, with his glass.

Jaime paled. "I had no idea." Pamela had made a few shrugging allusions to an unpleasant childhood, but had never burdened anyone with specifics. Except Mickey. It figured.

"It is but one single chapter in a whole rancid serial," he said knowingly, squeezing her hand.

She nodded. "I guess I didn't realize what she was up against. But she's got you and me, right? And Jason. Jason's good for her."

"She's nuts about him."

Several couples away, Pamela was threatening to douse Jason with bubbly if he did not cease with the dumb toasts. A cork went *bang* and somebody got drenched. Everybody laughed.

"Thanks, Mickey." She tilted forward to kiss him. Just as she made lip contact, he averted his head so that she got his cheek.

"Be good," he smiled, putting two fingers to her lips. "I'm not made of iron, you know."

Jaime knew. Athlete's sheet, indeed.

This was no joke. The casket lid was not going to pop back; Pamela was not going to sit up and yell *gotcha*. That would have blown Pavel Drak's tubes, all right. On the other side of the hole, Pamela's father shook hands and kept a stiff upper. He might have been blowing smoke at some fund raiser. Jaime imagined his eyes, behind their tinted glass, stripping and ravishing her.

The burden of remembrance is a weighty thing, she knew now, intimidating enough to bow the shoulders of the spiritually weak. Responsibility to the dead often starts time-bombs ticking within the survivors when they discover that death is not TV, not Disney, never easy or graceful or clean. Or temporary. Maybe Mickey was manufacturing his own brand of anguish right this moment. Jaime could not shove the Kipling poem "The Thousandth Man" from her mind, where it skip-repeated like a scratched

record.

*Nine hundred and ninety-nine depend*

*On what the world sees in you,  
But the Thousandth Man will stand your friend*

*With the whole round world agin you.*

And that goes double for girls, she thought. There were nine hundred and ninety-nine usurious fuckers, and more, afoot and breathing while Pamela was not. How could you be expected to stand against the world's indifferences and banal evils when the

*Mickey's rejection,  
his wariness, his  
utter non-  
recognition of her  
was frightening.  
His eyes held  
the same lost  
expression as  
Jason's had at  
Pamela's gravesite.*

good guys kept dropping? No fair. And Pamela was becoming a larger part of her life every moment Jaime herself breathed. That dull void in her heart, the Pamela-sized hole that had been ripped in her, was the worst thing she could ever feel.

The hole filled by Pamela's casket was beginning to look more and more like a mass grave for all the good things they had shared. Four people had gone under today, not one. Jaime stepped backward, away from the loamy darkness of that pit, as though there was a risk of slipping in.

"I want to find Mickey," she said. "Now."

Jason shook his head. He was despondent now, and had withdrawn to the point where he had not even noticed Jaime talking to herself—to Pamela—graveside. "I have to go home," he said after a deep breath. "I have something to do."

It's hitting him, she thought. He was going to burst into tears if she didn't stop hanging onto him, if she did not leave him alone right now. And the more she thought about Mickey's truancy, the madder she got. She

could do this by herself. "Well ... fine. We'll link up later, yes?"

"Yeah. We'll all get together later."

He escorted her to her car and kissed her. It was like cold, damp fog on her lips. Like nothing.

Terrific—some moron was trying to pummel the front door right out of its rickety frame.

Mick's brain thumped right along. A caber had crash-landed on his skull. He shot to wakefulness muggy with sweat, his throat arid, his mouth clogged with a thick, dog-turd tang that had reached up and nailed his sinuses shut. He had come up from sleep too fast; his eyes had the bends. This was definitely the most cacklingly awful biorhythmic phase of his entire life. He *arrghed* to the corners of his studio apartment. The mambo beat between his head and the door just kept right on rocking.

The doorknob began rattling. Footshadows interrupted the clean crack of daylight separating the bottom of the door from its threshold.

"Coming!" he croaked, at his faceless tormentor. He rubbed his face and his palm came away glistening with perspiration and oil. Falling asleep fully dressed had made him look like his own unmade bed. His hair was ... awful. His stereo stylus, long since finished with side one of *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*, skritch-d out a soft cadence. Mick had once bragged—to somebody or other—about his totally manual, belt-driven, smooth-as-lucite turntable with its twelve-pound professional dee-jay platter. Now a forty-dollar needle was grinding itself to diamond dust because he had passed out, and not even in the middle of a decent album. Whatever had inspired him to unsleeve the Elton John oldie was forgotten now, irrelevant.

Pound, thump, pound, skritch-skritch. It was not a sterling afternoon.

He yawned cavernously, smoothed back his hair and struggled to look intelligent as he unbolted and opened up.

"Christ, Mickey, I've been beating on this goddamned thing for five minutes! Why aren't you answering your phone?"

The adrenaline jolt helped wake him up. The woman on his stoop was simply lovely. His brain raced to catalogue her assets, and did not resist the list as it rolled up. Though cogent, he was still woozy and fantasy-inclined.

The gray suit-dress was strictly

conservative chic. Short, peppy dark brown hair. Large-lensed glasses in spidery frames, more young exec stuff. The eyes, the color of amber and brandied chocolate. She was sinfully tall, cut with confidence and regal bearing. Strong chin, small mouth, laugh lines. His eyes gave her the once-over. Twice.

"What the hell is *wrong* with you? Do I have a tarantula on my head?" She rolled her eyes and began to push past him. "Let me in—it's broiling out here."

... a charming stranger indeed, Mick's romanticist brain concluded. But his body instinctively shifted to block intrusion into his home by a stranger, charming or less, and when they collided she dropped her shoulder bag.

"I'm sorry?" he said, bending to retrieve. They nearly bonked heads. "I mean, I beg your pardon? You're not a Jehovah's Witness or something ... I hope?"

She yanked the bag free of him without thanks, and gaped as though he had just asked her to suck his toes.

He shrugged. "So what is it? Census bureau? Meter reader? Avon Lady? What can I do for you, um...?" His eyebrows went up, urging her to reveal her identity. It was a good place to begin.

She stopped dead for only an instant, then shook her head with the fatefulness of a woman who must endure a thick-headed little brother. "You picked a hell of a day to screw around with stupid jokes, love. It hasn't even been six hours. You going to tell me you forgot to set your alarm?" Her anger was growing. Past the frank glare in her eyes, Mick could see the redness of some recent hurt.

He coughed out a commiserative laugh which she did not share. "Uh ... what are you talking about, Miss?"

"Mickey! What's the secret word, today? Too much blow on our Fruit Loops this morning? Why are you being such an asshole?"

She tried to enter; he rebuffed her again.

"I'd really rather not let anyone in," he said. "My place is kind of a mess."

She looked upset, disoriented. "Your place is always a hog wallow, Mickey ..."

That was another thing, Mick thought, his pique kicking up from preheat to simmer. Where did this (admittedly gorgeous) nonentity get off calling him that? Mick was clipped, sharp, rock and roll, he liked it.

Mickey preceded *mouse*, and he could live without either.

He overrode her, firming up. "Lady. I do *not* know what you're talking about. Honest. I do *not* know who you are. And I don't know if I'm as eager to talk to you as I was fifteen seconds ago."

He saw the change wash over her expression, and its speed caught him unprepared. He could sense the gooseflesh scaring up on her back, the snap chill of a suppressed shudder, so out of place in the midday heat. Her mouth unhinged, drifting open. She seemed to shrink against an unyielding wall.



"Oh ... no," she whispered. Not to him.

He fought to lighten up, be boyish on short notice, to bring her back to where she had been seconds before, because her irritation was better to experience than her abrupt fear. He could hate himself later. "Hey, no, I—"

At the sound of his voice she began to edge back along the narrow breezeway, as though she could see him transmogrifying into a drooling werewolf.

He shook his head and got pain. The woman on his stoop was crazy; next case. His concern was easily overwhelmed by the idea that this was more than a joke ... it was an assault entrapment, or apartment filmflam, or other setup. Los Angeles was packed to the spires with predators that could look like this woman.

"Fine," he said, shutting the door. The bolt sprang to automatically.

He heard a muffled *no*, almost a cry of pain, and the futile thump of a small fist against the door. He ignored it, making for the bathroom and many aspirins. He was in no mood; he just wanted to lie down and go away for a

while. His bones and muscles ached, empty of vitality. He felt like a train wreck.

After a while the woman, whoever she was, however she had gotten his name, gave up and went away for good.

Jaime tried to swallow hot tears and her throat knotted shut. Strangers gawked at her wet face from their own cars.

It was Mickey, Mickey Banks, he of the corduroy jacket and cowboy boots and athlete's sheet, who had just slammed his door in her face. His rejection, his wariness, his utter non-recognition of her was frightening. It made her stomach cramp helplessly. His eyes held the same lost expression as Jason's had, at Pamela's gravesite. Jaime's hand tried to quiver; she gripped the wheel tighter.

Jason's machine had answered five times when Jaime ran out of payphone change. When she pulled up at his address, she saw exactly what she would see again on that evening's metro news.

The manner in which Jason Parrish had killed himself after Pamela Drake's funeral was reeled off in a hydrophobic torrent of babble by a TV newshound broadcasting from inside a fluttering yellow LAPD cordon. Jaime watched the slow zoom up to the wide open man door, and the equally predictable closeup of a body-bagged shape on a stretcher en route to the ambulance. It lolled.

Tomorrow the *Herald Examiner* would bid adieu to one of its own, with an even bigger wallow in the grisly Known Facts.

Jason Arthur Parrish, 31, was found dangling from his dining room archway, his neck pulled long, face a deep indigo from cyanosis, eyes bloated and dry. His tongue had swollen to the size of a black hockey puck. The nylon cord that had strangled him had stretched as his corpse sagged, but the give did not matter. His feet still cleared the floor by ten inches.

There was a note, displayed prominently on an antique writing desk Pamela had helped him pick out at Poor Ruth's. The nylon cord had come from a camping trip to the Sierra Nevada range that life in retail had prevented Jaime from joining.

Mercifully, the only photo to be included in the paper would be a staff glossy three years old. The note would not be reproduced. Jaime already knew it was about nothing but Pamela.

# PAMELA'S GET

Jason was gone. Mickey was gone. While Jaime had endured a nasal recitation of the Twenty-third Psalm by a hired minister with a game leg, Pavel Drake's hired movers had lain siege to Pamela's apartment. They received time-and-a-half for Sunday work, plus a fat tip for speed. By the time Pamela had filled the boxlike hole she would never leave, another box—a U-Haul storage locker much like a tomb itself—had been efficiently loaded with her possessions. The slickness of the arrangement would have offended Pamela, who would resent being so easily erased.

There was only one piece of Pamela left, and Jaime fled to it.

The anarchic untidiness of Jaime's clothes closet was a source of queer pride. With her promotion had come total whirlpool chaos in this one niche of her otherwise ordered living space; here was a guilty pleasure she could hold in common with Pamela. In the back of the closet (perhaps sucked back there as food by the forgotten and now-sentient blobs of polyester waiting in the darkness) was the Knudsen crate. In it were the letters, the snapshots, the physical residue of Pamela's passage through her life. It was more than enough to get drunk on.

The crate was the only piece of Pamela that Pavel Drake had not absorbed. There had to be a reason Jaime was permitted this one piece, and she found it, forgotten, buried in the back of the crate. Jaime thought of a Chinese box puzzle.

It was a fireproof Smythe document box, a steel rectangle in outdated industrial maroon, with a lock. Pamela had provided no key. Dimly, Jaime remembered being handed the box and being asked in a casual way to stash it.

Pamela's irresponsibility with minutiae was legendary. Jaime maintained a rolodex; Pamela had been known to write phone numbers in ink on the back of her hand. She only threw out the receipts she would later need. Jaime balanced her checkbook; Pamela's utilities usually avoided termination by scant hours. Clearly, more complex items like insurance—or wills, say—were scheduled for the turn of the century, because twenty-eight-year-olds should not have to worry about dying until later.

The incidents with Mickey, with Jason, had flooded Jaime with a sense of lost control, urgently accelerating. If her best friend Pamela had anything to say to her after death, now was the time to hear it.

Breaking the Smythe box's lock with the blade of a butcher knife was distasteful, akin to violation. A rape. Jaime wondered whether Pavel Drake's movers had broken into Jaime's apartment, similarly, to plunder.

The lid squeaked when she bent it

back. Even if she had recalled the box earlier, she never would have considered peeking. Pamela had banked successfully on her trust. Jaime felt a pang of resentment at being so predictable.

Boxes within boxes. Suddenly this did not look so random, so unplanned, so Pamela.

The tear tracks were dry on her face. She lifted out long pages, legal-sized, stapled to sky-blue stock backings, folded into oblongs and tucked into a vinyl folder. Her heart thudded and her breath pulled short. From Pamela of all people, could this be something for the record in black on white?

A handwritten note had been placed on top, but had fallen to one side and gotten creased thanks to the box's rough ride. Jaime immediately recognized the distinctive paraph of her best friend's script:

Dear Jaime,

Please trust me when I say what your going to see here is real. I'm sorry you have to find out this way, but if your reading this than I'm probabbly dead. You know how I work, your my best friend. So maybe youll understand without bad explanations. Your the puzzle solver. I love you.

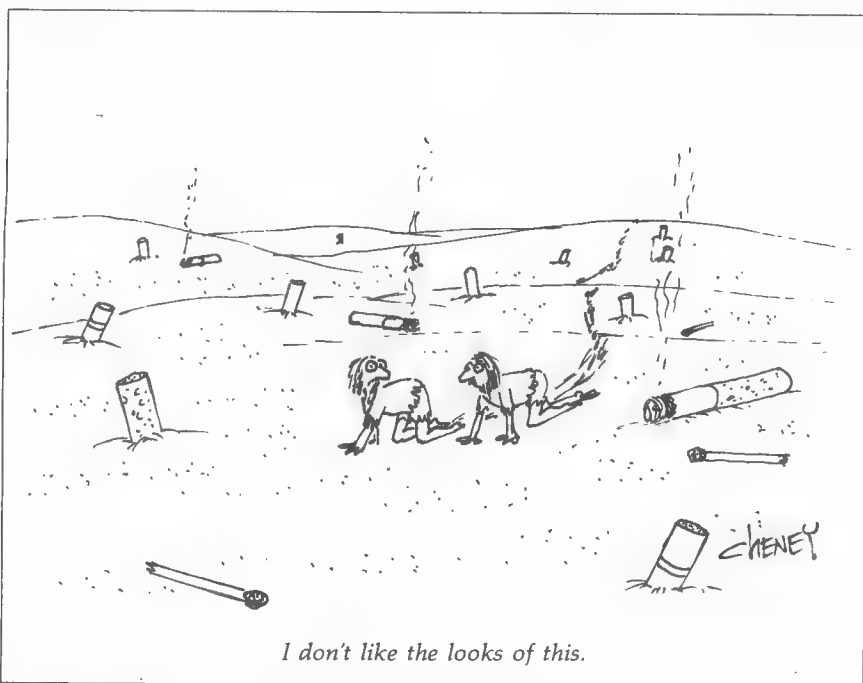
Pamela.

It was Pamela, sure as hell. The horrific spelling and grammar were ironclad verification. New tears made a bid for escape but Jaime swallowed them down. The note had been rendered with a soft-tipped art pen, in purple, Pamela's favorite color. She favored such pens for all kinds of jotting, and had thrown a fit when the manufacturer terminated them a couple of years back. The violet ink had already begun to fade.

You could not buy these pens anymore at any price. Like Pamela, they were part of the past now.

Jaime unsnapped the folder and counted three separate documents, each headed with the legend AGREEMENT in Gothic. The text nosedove straight away into legalese so dense that Jaime's eye rejected such unpalatably large glops. These were contracts. Her recognition of them scared her a bit—it was like Pamela sneaking into the paperwork she hustled daily at Sanger Harris.

The top one was drawn between PAMELA LYNN DRAKE and JAIME ANYA RALSTON. On the last page she saw Pamela's signature, again in florid pur-



*I don't like the looks of this.*

ple ink.

In the adjacent blank, written with the same pen, Jaime found her own signature.

The contacts seemed to jump from her lap, to fan themselves across the floor. Her throat dried up and began to pulse achingly. She had never see these papers before.

Nervously, she gathered them, checking the other two, fearing what she would see.

The second bore the name JASON ARTHUR PARRISH. Jason had been at the funeral, holding Jaime because there was no longer a Pamela to hold. The third contract was in the name of MICHAEL MARQUIS BANKS.

Known to his intimates as Mickey.

Her eyes hurt from scrutinizing the contracts. She squeezed them shut; tried to force more tears to come ... and got nothing.

She sat rereading Pamela's postcard, the specific one from Chicago she had remembered earlier. It had waited for her in the crate. Her eyes drifted over it dryly. Here was Pamela's description of their cozy little foursome in the days before madness and funerals.

From the bedamned contracts to the postcard and back again she went ... and her heart began to thud hard and fast. The love had been drained out, but there was still enough muscle remaining to give her whole body a sound jump at a sudden shock of inspiration.

The trendy pressure to have babies before thirty-five was nothing compared to the deadline with which she was now squared off. She raced back to her closet. An old Smith-Corona manual typewriter had been lost in there for at least as long as the Knudsen crate, and now she needed it as badly as air to breathe.

When she found it, she phoned Pavel Drake.

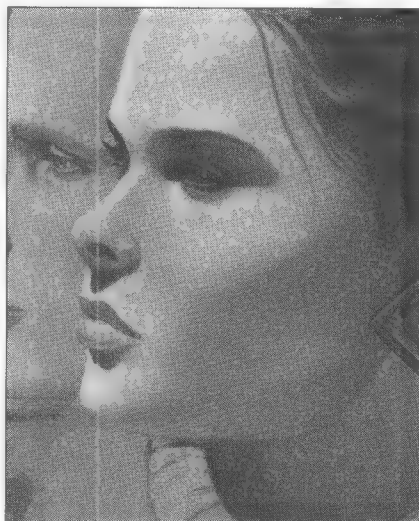
The silence on the line was adjudicatory, punctuated by the measured respiration of a self-important man, weighing trifles. Drake had delivered a terse reminder that any imposition less than twenty-four hours after his only child's funeral deserved nothing from him past an angry hang-up. Jaime had known he would not disconnect for two reasons.

Once she had rejected him. By making contact now she was offering him another shot, an opportunity to salve his bruised ego. He was the type of mercenary business mind who would never forget any slight, no matter how trivial. Now he might make

her crawl; or wait, or beg his help. Now he might do something so small as make her run the telephonic gauntlet to be granted the privilege of speaking with him.

More importantly, she mentioned the Smythe box—the single item that had eluded the neat dragnet of Pamela's life arranged by Drake's legal chickenhawks.

Beats of silence on the telephone can be exquisitely cruel. Drake wanted this acid quiet to slowly tear Jaime's heart out. He could not know that an hour ago she had run out of tears, and now her heart functioned only as a pump.



He instructed Jaime to ask for his table at That Obscure Object of Desire in half an hour. He called her Miz Ralston and made sure that he sounded properly put upon.

Before she flew out the door, she tried one last time to call Mickey. Or Mick. His line was already out of service.

Charlene the waitress faded, butt switching saucily to let Pavel Drake know she was still on call. Jaime took a tentative sip of her white wine, watching as the frost of condensation filled in her lip prints and restored uniformity to the surface of the glass. Drake had just made his snide remark about scams and polish and crust ... whatever the hell that meant.

"You want me to sign this," he said. His voice was low, disbelieving, calculatedly ugly.

"You have Pamela's power of attorney," Jaime said. "She can't sign it."

He caught her off guard by evidencing interest in her explanation. It was a trick of executive strategy—the lull before the kicker—but Jaime knew it. She had seen the momentary glint

in his eyes. "Now ... you're trying to say that Pamela ... made up her friends? Imaginary friends, like little kids have?"

"She conceptualized her ideal friends. Then she created pacts, promises of duties including every trait from loyalty to good housekeeping, and inscribed them with pseudonyms. See? They're even notarized. I don't have to remind you how imaginative she was."

No, that was the thing Drake had disliked most about his daughter. It had prevented her from becoming like him and following his corporate footprint trail. That would have been an alternative version of Pamela ... and what had become of that possibility, Jaime now realized with abrupt horror. It was spelled out in one of the clauses on the contract headed JAIME ANYA RALSTON, because there is a fragment of every daughter that wants to please Daddy. Even if Daddy is a philistine, even if the daughter is intractably rebellious.

"Pamela is dead. That hurts me more than I can say, Mr. Drake. I'm sure it hurts you, too, and people tend to lash out when they're in pain."

Again she spotted what might have been a ghostly wisp of human feeling, trapped in the darkness of his eyes, quickly engulfed. "Yes," he said, lifting his drink, then replacing it unspiced as though thinking better of the action. His stiff silence, just now, was a license for her to continue.

"If the contracts are bona fide, then my whole life history came out of Pamela's head. It's a great system—with one flaw. There is no provision for the contractor's death. She didn't factor it in; how many people under thirty bother with wills? But now that she's gone, the obligations of the contractees are discharged. Jason is dead. Mickey is gone ... or changed, I don't know. Either way he's not Mickey anymore. I was on the scene before either of them. Maybe that's how I lasted long enough to talk to you now."

Drake looked the page in his hand up and down one more time. It did not seem to surprise him.

"That's a new contract," said Jaime. "It supersedes Pamela's, and grants me an existence independent of hers. It's simply worded to assure you I'm trying to gain nothing through trickery. It's a simple business proposition, Mr. Drake. You sign, and I hand over Pamela's filebox, plus all her letters to me. A whole aspect of her you didn't see and never owned. No strings. All I get out of it is my own



# PAMELA'S GET

life, and I never bother you again."

He shifted his glass on the black tabletop like a chess piece. He could press a legal claim to the contents of the Smythe box, but the only thing in it had been the contracts. He rested the page Jaime had typed on the table. It took up nearly half the dry area. "You realize I'm under no obligation to indulge this sort of . . . behavior."

She leaned forward in entreaty. "Okay, so I'm as crazy as a firefly in a meth bottle. What's wrong with humoring me if you get something you want?"

Drake laughed. It was a harsh sound, like a cough. "I win either way. With a story like you've just told me, if you bother me again I can have you detained. If I endorse this fantasy fiction you've laid before me, you'll leave me alone. And if I don't—according to you—you'll vanish anyway, like the other two." He could taste the blood. "I think you've prepared for everything in this tactless scenario *except* for your bluff being called."

He produced a pen from a breast pocket and held it before her, like a magician preparing to prestidigitate. Jamie's heart went *bang*.

"I'll sign. But you must do something for me in return." He slid a brass-colored metal object across the slate tabletop. "Let's find out just how deeply you believe your own story, Ms. Ralston."

It was a hotel key embossed with a room number.

"Everyone gets what they want," he said.

The room seemed to plunge vertiginously. In one hideously elongated instant she flashed back to the crude scene at Pamela's birthday party, and realized that in some quarters the war never stopped, ever. The urge toward vengeance had swelled in both of them, poisonously heavy, dense as a tumor. That was how Pamela's letters had become her trump card. Let Drake win them and find out what his daughter *really* thought of him.

His angle of attack was clear. Here was a chance to slap her down, hard and humiliatingly, to neutralize her through collusion. His ejaculate could scorch away the tough fiber of

her determination, which, in a way, he had been responsible for creating by founding Pamela's tortuous childhood—the upbringing that made her crave her imaginary allies just strongly enough.

Jaime saw the hotel key as chance to spit in Pavel Drake's face for Pamela, for herself. Payback time for all the grief and rotten karma. All the gesture would cost her was her existence.

*I love you, Pamela*, she thought bitterly, as her mind raced toward the hard truth of her situation. The end it reached was not pleasant to acknowledge.

*I love you and I want to do right*

*Jaime took a sip  
of her white wine,  
watching as the  
frost of condensation  
filled in  
her lip prints  
and restored  
uniformity to the  
surface of the  
glass.*

*by you. But I'm also terrified. I want to live very much. Would you call this a betrayal? Or common survival sense? If you would forgive me this, why didn't I tell you about Jason that once? and if you won't forgive me . . . is there anything I could ever do that . . .*

Her soul was crippled, and odious, and it did what it had to. "Sign," she said, taking the key, already thinking that the true pain would be brief.

"In due time." His smile was like a pleat in his face. "Excuse me for just a moment." He was all the smooth mercenary now. He had a fast colloquy with Charlene, and pointed toward Jaime. Then he disappeared into the neon murk near the restrooms. There was probably a meeting to cancel.

In Jamie's bag was Pamela's contract. She'd read it a thousand times today, and soon she might burn this mortgage on her life. Tucked into a fold of the document was the postcard, from which she hoped to draw strength. She examined both while Drake was gone. When she saw her signature side by side with Pamela's on the contract's final page, a solitary tear leaked from her eye. Just one. It

burned coming out, a generous, salty reaffirmation of her own being. It struck the page and skidded through the middle of her name. The faded purple ink blotted and ran.

You could not buy these pens anymore, she remembered. They stopped making them. Pamela had gotten livid.

Charlene checked in at the bar and glided back to Drake's table just as a raucous stripper's hymn began to bump and grind out of the Object's migraine-sized PA system. She smiled at what she saw. Pavel Drake's latest Bambi had fled back to the forest, forgetting her purse and leaving behind a hotel key, an untouched drink, and a scatter of papers. With schooled motions Charlene swept up the bag and stuffed the papers into it. It was time for her to make a discreet trip to the Ladies. The postcard was the last item in. It featured a timed-exposure of Chicago's Lake Shore Drive at night. It would get chucked into the Object's dumpster along with the other junk just as soon as the wallet was vacuumed of cash and plastic.

Charlene cut loose a snort of disgust that caused her bare tits to bob. That girl, that amateur, had been young enough to be Drake's daughter, for chrissake.

Dear Jamie . . .

Phone not in yet but plenty of time to write as I got here just in time for the blizzards. In re our "what do I want from my friends" disc earlier I gave it some thought and here it is, gameshow style: (1) I'd want a person who'd *always* be my friend and *never* forget me and *always* remember the right dates and places, which I'm lousy at. (2) A handsome-ass lover who loved me enough to die for me (oh romantic notion) . . . or at least say so. (3) A buddy whose more organized than me, but who thinks like me—someone I could COUNT ON no matter what to take care of the odds and ends I *always* forget & am too sloppy to finish, or something.

Somebody to be there for me, somebody JUST LIKE YOU, doo-dah, doo-dah.

Its freezing here. Windy City, big dealski. Outta space, stay tuned for next card. Miss you terribly and love you lots. STAY WARM and XOXOXOX

Love,  
Pamela.

# JONES

(continued from page 55)

way to the next phase of Jones's development.

In paintings from this period such as *The Moon and Venus*, the idealized heroism of his earlier illustrations begins to fall away. In its place is the image of a woman, rendered with a romantic realism as expert as any living artist. A woman who feels, grows and ages, believable because she shares her mortality with us.



"Women are the subjects I most love to paint," says Jones. "But the women in my work now are human, capable of growth, capable of change, vulnerable as we all are. And, because of these qualities, they become people in whom I can believe, and for whom I can care."

And next? Jeffrey Jones is starting to paint landscapes, rich with the greens and blues of the woods around his studio in upstate New York. He has plans for major gallery shows over the next eighteen months, and Donald M. Grant is planning a new collection of his previous work.

Does this mean that the portfolio is closed on the fantasy world of Jeffrey Jones? "Insofar as fantasy lurks at the edge of every reality," he answers, "it is impossible to say." Although he admits he felt twinges when he was recognized as Best Artist last year by the World Fantasy Convention, Jones is, and has always been, an artist who resists categories and pursues his own inner visions.

What is certain is that his work will endure.

—Bernard Abrams

# CIRCLE

(continued from page 35)

state, with the forces of nature.

If the seeker is successful, he returns with a gift of spiritual power, an intensified knowledge or understanding of the world around him, often symbolized by an object of power or a spiritual guide (often an animal) which becomes his focus of power. In many Indian cultures, the vision quest is an essential rite of passage, the way a child becomes an adult.

Why, after four centuries of oppression, are we now developing new respect for ideas we once attempted to destroy? It may be that we are at last recognizing the limits of Western cultural values, and seeking wisdom we can use from other cultures.

More than two thousand years ago, Europeans lived very like Indians did only two centuries ago. They lived close to nature; they feared and venerated natural forces; they propitiated those forces with rites and ceremonies. But the rise of Classical civilization caused growing belief in reason, order, and the scientific method. Technology created tools not only for improvement, but for destruction.

With the rise of Christianity, anything that was considered mystical was either kept within the walls of the Church, or attacked as demonic. Science displaced faith, and intellect replaced intuition. Finally, in our time, capitalism and materialism have become the chief instruments, if not the philosophies, of Western civilization.

Today, we've advanced further, technologically, than any of Aristotle's disciples could have imagined. But, as we have become more successful, we've paid a great price for success. Fortunately, our concerns for the environment, our growing awareness of the dehumanizing impositions of corporate culture, have revealed some of the limits of our culture. Our expanding interest in other traditions—Buddhism, Indian mysticism, Zen—represents our longing for more organic, humane, spiritual ways of thinking. Perhaps in Native American culture we hope to catch a glimpse of some of the truths Western civilization left behind somewhere in its own history. Perhaps we may even grow to understand them once again. ■

# JEFFREY JONES



## Blind Narcissus

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A masterpiece of contemporary romantic art, Jeffrey Jones's renowned painting *Blind Narcissus* is now available in a full-color limited edition print of one thousand copies signed and numbered by the artist.

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# BOOKS

(continued from page 12)

Other than that cavil, I must report that this lead-off selection in Zebra's new series of *Omni* anthologies is an admirable sampler of contemporary science fiction.

There are fourteen stories—thirteen reprints and one original novelette by Pat Cadigan. The stories, all first appearing within the past five years, range from the cutting-edge "New Rose Hotel" by William Gibson to Howard Waldrop's typically askew "Man Mountain Gential" to more traditional pieces such as Barry Longyear's "Adagio" and "The Changed Man" and the King of Words" by Orson Scott Card. For gut-level psychological fiction, there's Garry Kilworth's wrenching "The Songbirds of Pain." And just for the hell of it, there is Cynthia Felice's Bigfoot/Christmas/space-colonization story, "Track of a Legend."

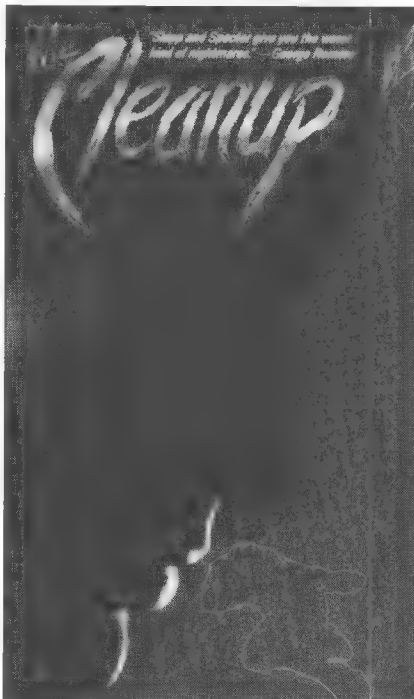
Pat Cadigan's original contribution to this volume is "Lunatic Bridge," another pathosfinder story about Deadpan Allie, the brain-delver. Allie is hired by one Coor to check out his ex-partner Lam. Coor and Lam were psychically linked composers, now separated. Maybe. Cadigan uses the metaphor of extrapolated brain research to explore the nature of marriage and divorce. Cyberpunks need personal therapy too, it seems. Aside from being a very good story, Cadigan's novelette points up the unfortunate situation of *Omni* not having a sufficient page allotment to allow fiction of any substantial length. It would be nice to see longer pieces at least appearing in the Zebra anthologies—and nicer still if the magazine could find a way once again to produce all-original collections.

Appearances might seem to the contrary, but Jean Auel isn't the only writer fictionally exploring the Pleistocene. There are Bjorn Kurten's novels, of course, and now there is *Neanderthals* edited by Robert Silverberg, Martin H. Greenberg, and Charles G. Waugh (Signet, 351 pp., \$3.95, ISBN 0-451-14716-2). Though the cover's a bit peculiar, I've got nothing terribly good or bad to say about the contents. There are eleven stories. Some are as well-known and oft-reprinted as Isaac Asimov's "The Ugly Little Boy," L. Sprague DeCamp's "The Gnarly Man," and "The Alley

Man" by Philip José Farmer. Others, such as Will McMorrow's "Man O' Dreams," have been excavated from literary middens almost as far removed from us as the Third Glacial period. Also included is appropriate nonfiction by Isaac Asimov and Robert Silverberg. This is one of those solid middle-of-the-road anthologies.

I was, however, struck by the cover. Paul Van Munching's painting seems to show a Neanderthal tot about to rip the head clean off a cute little red-haired playmate. Sibling species competition, no doubt.

A friend of mine works for one of



those kid-vid Saturday morning-type animated series. She refers to it as a "neo-fascist, military boy-toy show." You know the sort I mean. Like *Robotech*.

Speak of the devil. Del Rey books is publishing a series of novels based on that Japanese marvel. The first four *Robotech* books have been published; they will now issue forth at a one-per-month pace. The titular author is "Jack McKinney," a pseudonym for two competent and decently talented writers who, after all, need to make a living.

Are the *Robotech* books suitable for ages above ten? It depends. How fond are you of the writing style, characterization, and general level of sophistication some readers recall nostalgically from the early 1930s? Here are a few quotes from the text of the fourth and most recent book, *Battlehymn* (212 pp., \$2.95, ISBN 0-345-34137-6):

"He had no inkling then of the bizarre reversals that were to come not only from his own agents but from another whose micronized presence onboard the SDF-1 was to come as a complete surprise."

and

"Ben's voice was terror-filled: 'It's too late, Rick! I can't make ... Aaarrggghhh! ...'"

and

"Beyond the rim of the Zen-traedi warship they could see the barrier transubstantiate: What appeared as the selfsame shield was in fact shot through and through with submolecular death."

It's also interesting to note how hard "science" is tinged with such a distinctly orthodox Christian tone in these books.

There is once again a new edition of Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (Beacon Press, 213 pp., \$7.95, ISBN 0-8070-6313-4). This novel catalyzed a certain degree of uproar in the sf field when it was first published by Bantam in 1975. Since then, the book has obstinately refused to go out of print, moving from Bantam to a Gregg hardback; then to a British feminist press, and now to the American publishing wing of the Unitarian Church. *The Female Man* deserves to stick around for a good long while. At least until human society gets this matter of gender roles right.

If you haven't actually read the novel, do so. It's about women in collision—the women happen to be from a variety of alternate and future Earths, all of which, of course, are painfully telling reflections of our own. Every word is carefully calculated to irritate, skewer, challenge, or exalt the reader—all depending, of course, upon the reader's index of openness to changes rung on what most term political and socio-sexual "reality." Piercy, Gearhart, Lessing, et. al. notwithstanding, *The Female Man* is still the archetypal feminist science fiction novel.

## Editor's Note

*Masques II*, an anthology published by Maclay & Associates (P.O. Box 16253, Baltimore, Maryland, 21210), will be available in May. Included in the collection will be "The Boy Who Came Back From the Dead," a novelette by *Twilight Zone* Associate Editor Alan Rodgers.

# GAMES

by Robert Simpson

## Learning to live with Paranoia.

You wake up one morning to a world gone red.

Your eyes, not yet adjusted to the artificial rays stabbing through the red-curtained windows, wince at the first light of day. You strain to look as far to the sides as possible, using only your peripheral vision, not daring to move your head. The slightest pivot, and they will know you're looking for them. You see red walls, red furniture, even red clothing over the back of a red chair. At last you're sure that there is no one but you in the room now. But you know that *someone* was here last night, watching your nostrils flare and contract as you slept—and you count yourself lucky that someone chose to let you live for one more day.

A voice whispers your orders in your ear. You rise, dress all in red, and step outside the door. Your eyes are assaulted by an ocean of colors. There are dozens of people in blue, green, yellow, all looking at you and your red clothing with contempt. You know (you *know*) they all want you dead. You draw your pistol and check your watch. Another day has begun in Alpha Complex.

And what a day it will be. You'll have to deal with unregistered mutants, assassins from the Sierra Club, mavericks who'll murder you without a second thought, and a crazed Computer out to expunge treason from your domed city. And—oh, yes—one more thing. *You're a clone.*

Unless this is the way your day always begins, you've just crossed over into the world of *Paranoia*. Not the mental state, but something close to it: an elaborate new game from the schizoid folks at West End Games. The creation of designers Daniel Seth



Gelber, Greg Costikyan, Eric Goldberg, and Ken Rolston, *Paranoia* won the H.G. Wells Award and was named one of *Games Magazine's* top 100 games.

In order to determine if *Paranoia* is for you, there are a few things you should know about it. First, *Paranoia* is a *role-playing game*. For those of you who've played role playing games, that description may be enough. For the rest of us, here's a little background.

Role-playing games, simply put, are a sort of cross between storytelling and theatrical performance. Each player takes on the persona of a different character, and stays in character throughout the course of a carefully orchestrated scenario. You are led through the storyline by a player called the *gamemaster*, who has the entire story at his disposal. The gamesmaster presents the players with a situation, and they respond by improvisation to the best of their abilities.

There's no way to pin down the exact date that this kind of gaming began, but most enthusiasts put the dawn of role-playing somewhere in the early 1950s. It began as an outgrowth of military strategy games, in which players took on the character of opposing commanders in the great battles of history. Over time, innovations were added, like the gamemaster and the concept of *character genera-*

*tion*—developing a collection of traits, such as strength, agility, wisdom, and courage, that are determined for each character by rolls of dice.

Today, the games have grown in scope and complexity, until there is hardly a genre—barbarian sword and sorcery, science fiction post-apocalypse wasteland battlefield, westerns, detective dramas, you name it—that doesn't have a role-playing game based on it.

The best-known role-playing game, and the most popular by far is TSR's *Dungeons and Dragons*, a series of fantasy adventures through a Tolkeinesque landscape of wizards, dragons, elves and trolls. In the early 1970s, two Midwestern hobbyists named Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson began experimenting with the military strategy games they'd grown up with. When the two introduced elements of fantasy into the mix, it started a grassroots phenomenon that developed into a full-blown industry. Their company, TSR, Inc. (short for Tactical Studies Rules), is now a multimillion dollar enterprise, and "D&D", like Xerox, has become the catch phrase for the uninitiated. Until a short time ago, I was one of those thundering masses of the uninitiated. Like many of you, I went through high school watching friends play games like Steve Jackson's *Car Wars* in the student lounge and lunchroom, doubting their sanity because I didn't understand what they were doing with their graph paper and twenty-sided dice. Since I only had a short time to research the game I went straight to the source. My first stop: a gaming store.

Forbidden Planet, a science fiction theme store that sells books, magazines, posters, and toys, is one of the four or five largest dealers of fantasy role-playing materials around.

The store manager's recommenda-





tion was *Paranoia*, a science fiction game from the New York-based West End Games, creators of games based on *Ghostbusters* and *Star Trek*, as well as Roger Zelazny's "Amber" series. It's set in a world in turmoil. Sometime in the twenty-second century, San Francisco has been encased beneath a dome and placed under the control of the Alpha Complex Computer, which has cut itself off from the rest of the computers in the world-wide Alpha Prime Network, machines it believes to be guilty of treasonous "Commie" behavior. (Due to an information retrieval error, the Computer is using information and strategies from 1957.) The Computer also believes that almost all of the residents of Alpha Complex are traitors and should be executed. Most of them (including you) are, and you are in constant danger of discovery.

For reference purposes, the society within the dome is ranked into subsections by colors of the spectrum, with each class forced to wear its designated color. The lowliest are the infrareds, who dress in black. The loftiest rank (ultraviolet), the High Programmers, are supposed to wear white. But no other character has ever seen anyone wearing white, so Programmers are pretty much believed to be a legend. Follow so far?

It gets worse. The literature that accompanies the original boxed set—140 pages in all—is daunting to say the least. When I asked the *Twilight Zone* editorial staff to join me in an informal game, we spent most of the time at first just reviewing the rules. It was clear to all of us that, unlike some role-playing games, *Paranoia* places enormous demands on the gamemaster, whose responsibility it is to represent the Central Computer,

and therefore to lie, cheat, deceive, set the players at each others' throats, and, at times, summarily execute them.

While the game seems interesting and imaginative, it requires you to devote a huge amount of time to mastering the intricacies. Many gamers set aside at least a weekend a month to this hobby, and that seems like a good system. It's not something like *Monopoly* that you can pick up and start playing after a few minutes. In fact, there's a chart on the back of the *Paranoia* box that rates the difficulty of the game on a scale from one to six. (No game rates a six.) *Paranoia* falls at level three, with *Monopoly* at level one.

I'm not ashamed to admit I was intimidated. To find out if *Paranoia* was, in fact, tougher than other role playing games, I turned to an expert: one of the people who helped develop the game.

John M. Ford is a name as well-known outside the gaming field as in it. Author of a number of short stories and several novels, including *Web of Angels* and *Princes of the Air*, Ford won the World Fantasy Award in 1984 for his alternate-world fantasy *The Dragon Waiting*. But Mike Ford is also a twenty-year veteran of strategic and role-playing games, and has worked on several games for West End prior to his involvement with *Paranoia*. He has also written his own *Paranoia* module (a prepackaged further adventure that links with the basic game) called "The Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues." He sees *Paranoia* as a game that will appeal to outsiders as well as experienced players, with a setting that is at least as easy to master as that of *Dungeons and Dragons*.

"I've been playing these games since long before there was officially a role-playing market. In creating this game, or any game, there really isn't that much more 'backstory' that the reader or player has to know to get through it. And it really wasn't that much harder—or easier—to write it."

I asked Ford if he thought role playing games were growing or headed for a bust like video arcade games a few years back. He feels that since the majority of players discover role playing in their adolescence, they go through a phase of total immersion and then go on to other things. "It's the same as anything; when you stop playing the games, it seems that everyone has and that the game stops existing. But the audience for this is a constant age group, and once you move out of it there's another generation that's waiting to move in."

And what about the future? Are role-playing games threatened in any way by the growing computer game market?

"I don't think the two are really that comparable," Ford answered. "The computer game stories that exist now are lacking in one major factor: they can't think."

"As we get closer to artificial intelligence," he continued, "there may be a time that working on a story with a computer might be more appealing. I'm not saying I dislike the computer games that are around now—I have a bunch of them piled up in the corner. They're great fun when you can't get six people around a table and want to mess around with an adventure. But in games like [Infocom's] *Zork*, you're mostly figuring out the preprogrammed prompts that the computer is steering you toward. And sometimes the computer cheats."

The computer cheats? That sounds unsettlingly like a certain game I've been trying to get the hang of. Maybe that's why I had trouble learning the game. *It didn't want me to learn it.*

Like that cab driver I had last night. First he didn't want to pick me up. Then he kept trying to take me places I didn't even want to go. Then he started staring at me. They all stare at me. I know they're talking about me. I know....

Or maybe it was the editor. Yeah, that's it. It's all *his* fault. I'll bet you don't even get to see these words ... [Editor's note: The column above, reproduced verbatim, was delivered to our offices in a small red box by a man dressed in white. There was no return address.] ■

# SCREEN

by Gahan Wilson

## On Alienation, Dreams, Angels, and Evils.

*Man Facing Southeast* (Filmdallas)  
*A Nightmare on Elm Street 3—Dream Warriors* (New Line Cinema Corp.)  
*Evil Dead 2—Dead by Dawn*  
(Rosebud Releasing Corp.)  
*Angel Heart* (Tri-star)

There have been, through the years, a number of films which have taken one of the scariest and most thought-provoking of all the basic science-fiction ideas—what in God's name *would* happen if an alien being crossed the starry gap and came to live among us?—and attempted to treat the notion in a grown-up fashion.

If the barest modicum of intelligence is brought to bear on the fantasy, it is assumed as a given that the being is superior to us in a multitude of awesome ways since it has the technology to have crossed that starry gap, and since the myth underlying these newer myths is the myth of angelic visitation, and angels are by definition wonderful to mortals.

It is *not* assumed that the being is benign; indeed, since the appalling thought that some angels may be devils first crossed our collective mind we have been much more than half aware that if we ever suffered such a visitation it might be from a creature who was actively hostile; H.G. Wells's thirsty Martians (and Orson Wells's brilliant joke played with them) are probably the most famous examples of such a species.

More creepily frightening than that nightmare is the excellent possibility that such a being would treat us with the same hideous contempt with which most of our species treats the rest of creation, namely that it would be cruel



**MIDNIGHT SNACK:** Freddy Krueger devours Patricia Arquette.

to us in a scale ranging from not being able (and not interested enough to try) to tell us from the daisies and step on us both with equal casualness and lack of pity, like H.P. Lovecraft's beasties, to being very much interested in us and enjoying the heck out of informative little experiments on us, but not giving a damn whether they leave us gloriously improved or hideously; the best of these I can recall being Mark Twain's *Mysterious Stranger*, a saintly-seeming creature who never tired of sculpting whole little communities of humanish beings from river mud, bringing them to life so that he could watch them desperately struggle for love and success, and then squashing them all flat with a plank so he could do it all over again.

More likely than the above alternatives (and I do hope I'm not whistling in the dark) is the superior alien who, because it *is* superior, is not only technically but morally our better. The thinking behind that—and I know it is

shaky—is that maybe, just perhaps, if an intelligent species hangs around long enough it may tend to actually *grow up* (all right, so I'm a crazy visionary) and its members may finally stop playing childish, cruddy little power games on one another and turn their attention to adult activities.

Of course a member of any species which had arrived at such a point would be totally baffling to us apes if he landed amongst us, and (now we're finally getting back to moving pictures, sorry for the extended diversion) Michael Rennie in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and David Bowie in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* both had a hell of a time trying to help us out, and in the end Bowie blows it and does a sixties drop-out and Rennie only gets some dim understanding because he's had the smarts to enlist the aid of Albert Einstein in the person of Sam Jaffe, but I, for one, had a sneaking suspicion as his flying saucer

soared off that we'd soon turn back into naughty children.

*Man Facing Southeast* is the latest film to approach the concept of the morally superior alien among us, and it's a lovely movie. It was produced in Brazil, written and directed by Eliseo Subiela, and the alien is played by Hugo Soto who bears a synchronistically uncanny resemblance to H.P. Lovecraft (a teensy bit more chin and I'd seriously wonder if the whole thing wasn't some complex Yuggothian put-on), and I am absolutely sure it won't get a general release—don't expect it to turn up in the naves and drive-ins—and probably won't even make it to cassettes. I would suggest to you it is worth going to some effort to see it. It may get, mixed blessing, a cult following, which means you'll be able to catch it at some odd hour in a weird theater. Grab the chance.

Mr. Soto's alien takes up residence in an insane asylum on his own (he explains he's simply saving time since our society would inevitably end up sending him there), and becomes the obsessive preoccupation of one of the doctors in charge, very nicely played by Lorenzo Quinteros, who spends the rest of the movie trying, unsuccessfully, of course, to figure him out.

The other inmates instantly realize that the Alien is some wonderful sort of being and trail after him with a touching, watchful veneration as he wanders about the asylum's grounds and corridors with a wonderfully realized careful awkwardness (I don't think I've ever seen anyone do a better job of getting across the notion that the body you see is a strange body borrowed) in order to carry out his peculiar duties, the main one of which is to stand in a certain spot on the lawn, determined by God-knows-what



**REHASHED ASH:** Bruce Campbell returns as Ashley in *Evil Dead 2*.

calculations or instructions, and face southeast in a yogic sort of trance for long, calm hours.

He also plays Bach magnificently on the hospital church's organ, patiently attempts to explain his situation to the Doctor, and makes sorties off the grounds whenever he wishes (the guards are—need it be said—no match for his maneuvers) in order to carry out odd little missions such as arranging to have plates of food slide along the counter of a diner out from under wealthier patron's forks in front of a hungry woman so that she can feed her hungry children.

All is not well with our Alien because Earth is dangerous. You can get too interested in leaves, for example and start to feel, and that interferes with communication, with the whole project. He knows another alien, a woman; she feels, now, and whenever she does a little blue stuff comes from her mouth. Our Alien goes to a concert and—in one of the most charmingly alien moves I've ever seen an Alien makes—dances a waltz to a Beethoven choral; and back at the asylum, far from the sound of the orchestra, the inmates wildly celebrate the music and confound the guards who watch all that joy anxiously. The alien arranges to help out in the dissection room where he can study staring, peeling embryos in jars and tend to the freshly dead. His concern is not only with living Earthlings.

Of course both our Alien and his puzzled Doctor get deeper and deeper

into trouble, this world is too much for them both, but I won't go into any more specifics as you'll have more fun seeing them for yourself, which I hope you can manage to do.

#### Better Be Ready For More Freddie

*Nightmare on Elm Street 3—Dream Warriors* has Wes Craven back on the script and Freddy Krueger's back on track as the chappie who takes all the safety out of that heretofore comforting phrase: "it was only a dream." You fall asleep, or even just nod off at your peril on Elm Street, or in the asylum (a very different item from the Brazilian one we just left) which is the main locale in this movie.

The asylum is a novel operation and seems to have an entire wing devoted to aging adolescents who have one way or another come in contact with the vile Freddie, but of course the authorities there persist in refusing to face up to the fact (and it takes a lot of refusing what with all those mangled bodies piling up in the asylum morgue) that the situation is as their patients describe it.

Heather Langenkamp, a prominent prior Freddy victim, turns up in a new guise as dream specialist, but she, too, is unable to convince those blasted authorities (it may be because she is such a particularly awful actress) and so must set out to take care of nasty Freddie pretty much on her own.

There is all sorts of fun and games with rotting old wards and



**MAN OF YOUR DREAMS:** Robert Englund as the irrepressible Krueger.

ghostly nuns (very Gothic touch, that) and Freddie turns up in all sorts of guises ranging from a marionette to a rotting skeleton to a transformed Dick Cavett who attacks none other than Zsa Zsa Gabor, so by God you can't say ol' Wes hasn't rolled his shirt-sleeves past his elbows on this one. Nicely diverting spookhouse fun for you and your loved ones, only for God's sake stop bringing your babies as their constant screaming gets on my nerves, and Freddie can't be good for them.

#### Not Evil, Only Bad

*Evil Dead 2*—*Dead by Dawn* is a much more highly financed sequel to *Guess What*, and if you liked *Guess What*, you'll probably like this. Myself, I just couldn't seem to get into *EDI*, even though I tried, and, sure enough, I found I had the same problem with its offspring.

I'm really not all that sure *why* I find them all that boring, to be honest. The explanation that springs to my lips is that the characters are trotted on without any attempt at getting you interested in them before the whatnannies start to attack. It's usually an accepted politesse that the production team of a horror movie engages in at least a marginal pass at helping you believe that the pretty young female actress is really perky Betsy Brown the High School girl who can't stand biology in class but has carefully hidden orgasms whenever Big Dave the basketball star walks by even though she knows he'll never love her before they have the albino abominable snow woman burst suddenly out of the stall in the Girl's Room, or that the familiar old character actor is actually a tweedy archaeologist who may not be sure if he parked his car behind the Urpa Barfa Epsilon building or if today is actually his wife's birthday but who can nevertheless rattle off the individual tomb curse carved on each and every pharaoh's seal in all Egyptian history before he opens that funny package that arrived from Cairo and gets his hand bit off by a mummified baby alligator. *Evil Dead 1 & 2* have no truck with such high-faluttin' stuff, they just bring 'em on and flail away at 'em until they drop, and I find it's particularly hard to whip up much in the way of sympathetic interest, or any interest at all, in seeing an actor who is bad enough to clearly deserve it get bashed and jellied by *thangs* in a little mountain cabin which I also never for a minute believe is anything other than a bad set.

I guess you could sum up my es-



**HARD HEARTED:** Mickey Rourke as *Angel Heart*'s seedy detective.

sential complaint as follows: if you want a horrible, shocking monster to be shocking and horrible you have to provide some at least half-assed believable people and places for it to be contrastingly horrible and shocking against. If you don't bother to do that all you've got is just another fakey-looking unconvincing thing.

Also, doubtless much more important than all this high-toned stuff, *Evil Dead 2* is—maybe I'm actually creating this terminology, maybe not—a jump movie. It's supposed to make you jump in your seat, preferably lots of times. *Evil Dead 2* didn't make me jump once, and as I've said before, I'm a willing jumper. Ask anybody who's sat next to me while I'm watching a good jump movie and they'll tell you I jump something fierce. Anyone of them can tell you that.

#### At *Angel's Heart*:

##### Two Too Nice Guys

*Angel Heart* is written and directed by Alan Parker, of *Midnight Express* and *Pink Floyd—The Wall*, and based on William Hjortsberg's novel *Falling Angel*. It starts out as a very tough tough detective movie with Mickey Rourke as its tough-yet-weak private eye, and follows him into Harlem, into a Black revivalist church run by a Father Devine sort of rogue, but Rourke's business is not with the preacher but with an odd, sleazy fellow with long fingernails and a posedly mysterious manner played by Robert De Niro. This tacky and sinister fellow hires Rourke for much, much more than he ordinarily gets (he makes it clear he will hire no other

detective) to track down a missing singer with the great cheesy name of Johnny Favorite, and that sets off a really swell spooker, a *film noire* homage of fine, ominous menace and brooding danger, lots of great locations in New York and New Orleans. The New Orleans stuff is particularly effective, it presents the place as being absolutely terrifying, with all sorts of excellent suspects and shady types along the way including Michael Higgins as a doped-out asylum doctor (lots of laughing academics this article), Charlotte Rampling as an extremely tricky astrologer with lots of stuff she isn't telling the clients, and Lisa Bonet as a very sexy little voodoo priestess who got the production a lot of publicity by shocking the folks who rate the films and decide if they're "X" or not something awful. The thing just bundles along, new shocks every minute, a growing feeling of puzzlement as to what is going on, and the script, playing completely fair with the viewer wraps it all up with a double spin ending which justifies all the gory activities, accounts completely for many odd incongruities, and gives about the only explanation possible for such thoroughly evil goings on.

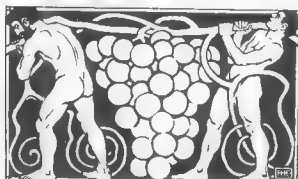
So why am I not dancing in the streets and telling you to track it down by all means and crush it to your heart and tell it that you love it? Well, I would mess the whole thing up if I did tell you why I can't—it would be sort of the ultimate "the butler done it" type of review and I am strongly against those but I think I *can* say that when the big revelation hits the fan, the casting of the two most important characters in the thing—Rourke as the essentially flabby-in-the-center gumshoe and De Niro as the mannered and mysterious, but all the time oddly silly man who hired him—turns out to have been spectacularly bad. Just flamingly awful. De Niro is given a pivotal moment of revelation and blows it totally, sort of in the same way Telly Savalas played the head of SPECTRE and reduced him to nothing more than a street-smart dude for all his try at suavity. And Rourke's essential pulpiness, which was fine for the scuzzy detective as we understood him up to then, suddenly becomes wrong, wrong, wrong, and there's nothing he's got in his actor's armory that can right it.

Really a pity, but the whole thing collapses through the total lack of presence the two actors have to come up with and can't. Neither one of them has it in him.

Otherwise it's a swell movie. ■



# HOLLYWOOD GRAPEVINE



The summer of 1987 doesn't look too hopeful for the science fiction and fantasy field. There are quite a few genre films planned for release this summer, but little of it is very exciting. I'll briefly list some of the ones that appear interesting:

**Amazon Women on the Moon** is a completion of several short comedy pieces. The directors include **Joe Dante** (*The Howling* and *Gremlins*) and **John Landis** (*Trading Places* and *An American Werewolf in London*). Joe Dante originally wanted this film to be titled **Closed for Remodeling**—a marquee sign certain to draw customers.

**Batteries Not Included** has been pushed back to Christmas. It's a story of older people in New York City who encounter aliens and flying saucers. It stars **Jessica Tandy** and **Hume Cronyn** and is directed by **Matthew Robbins**.

**Creepshow II** is a sequel to the mildly successful film of the nearly-same name. It's based on screen stories written by **Stephen King** but I don't believe King wrote the screenplay this time.

**Harry and the Hendersons** is about a Middle-American family that has a sasquatch come to live with it. The film stars **John Lithgow**, **Melinda Dillon**, and **Don Ameche**.

**Innerspace** is Joe Dante's latest science fiction feature. The story is being kept hush-hush, but the inner spaces referred to in the title are said to be much the same as the ones in *Fantastic Voyage*.

**Jaws: the Revenge** and its temperamental shark kept Michael Caine from attending the Academy Awards in March. A new and more dangerous shark is back to keep swimmers from the ocean depths. Some fish never learn.

**Lost Boys** is already controversial



**Joe Dante explores  
Amazons and Innerspace.**

months prior to its release. Starring **Edward Herrmann** and **Barnard Hughes**, it's essentially the tale of Peter Pan as vampire, and at an advance screening a number of film buffs nearly ended in fisticuffs or at least thrown bagels.

**Masters of the Universe** is a live-action version of the animated series *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*. **Dolph Lundgren**, the Russian boxer from *Rocky IV*, portrays He-Man. At least he looks the part.

**The Princess Bride** is directed by **Rob Reiner** (*Stand By Me* and *This is Spinal Tap*) from the screenplay and novel by **William Goldman**, one of Hollywood's top writers.

**Robojax** is **Stuart Gordon's** (*The Reanimator* and *From Beyond*) latest epic. The screenplay is by **Joe Haldeman** (author of the novel *The Forever War*). Haldeman hates the title and allegedly refuses to say it out loud.

For reasons that are beyond me *Alf* has been renewed for next season. Several people keep telling me they like the series; that the show is funny. I don't believe it. I've watched it four times—more than enough tries to be fair. Uh-uh. The design and operation of the puppet is fine but the material sucks warty pickles. The only material that was funny were the cat jokes and they got old pretty quickly. But for those who like it, there is rejoicing in the land. Twenty-two episodes.

There have been problems in the offices of the new *Star Trek: The Next Generation* series. Twenty-six hours are being done for the syndication market but the inside word at **Paramount** is that management is not happy with what's coming out of the *Star Trek* offices. The series bible has been rewritten more than once and it apparently became quite an arduous search to find someone willing to take the job of Line Producer.

There seems also to have been a great deal of unnecessary secrecy and paranoia within those same offices, the like of which isn't even seen with the Spielberg picture. It isn't as if someone could rush another space series out and steal their audience. *Star Trek* is the one syndicated series virtually assured of success. The name alone is money in the bank. Look at *Star Trek—The Motion Picture*. It was one of the most expensive films ever made and not really very good. Yet it was extremely successful.

According to recent reports the new crew of the Enterprise includes the following characters: **William Ryker**, the commander of the ship; **Data**, an android created by an unknown alien race; **Dr. Beverly Crusher**, the ship's medical officer; **Dr.**

Crusher's son Wesley; and a beautiful, tough female security officer "Macha" Hernandez.

The series was slated to begin production in June.

A two-part mini-series will kick off the third season of *The Disney Sunday Night Movie* this fall. *Earth Star Voyager*, set one hundred years in the future, tells the story of a young space crew seeking a planet for a resource-starved Earth to colonize. The mini-series is based on an original story by Ed Spielman with a teleplay written by Spielman, Steve Lawson, and Cynthia Darnell. It's directed by James Goldstone, who also directed the *Where No Man Has Gone Before* pilot episode of *Star Trek*. This four hour drama is a pilot for a potential series.

Our favorite filmmakers, *The Cabana Boys*, are always full of surprises. When last we saw them, these two former Beverly Hills Hotel swimming pool attendants with dreams of making *Buckaroo Banzai II* had managed to convince the wife of a prominent New York plastic surgeon to provide the funds for them to form a production company. They then purchased the screen rights to William Gibson's award-winning novel, *Neuromancer*, and had hired Earl Mac Rauch (*Buckaroo Banzai*) to write the screenplay.

Since then, they have made a deal with Timothy Leary to produce some kind of interactive computer game based on the book, and have explored a number of other ways to exploit the property without actually going ahead with the film.

Now, an entirely new and unexpected twist, even for the Cabana Boys. It was announced in early April that Earl Mac Rauch's completed screenplay is being completely thrown out in favor of a new version. And who wrote the new version, you might ask? Well none other than Deborah I. Rosenberg and Ashley Tyler. And who are they? Well, Mrs. Rosenberg is "the wife of a prominent New York plastic surgeon" as well as being the chairman and chief executive officer of Cabana Boy Productions. Ashley Tyler is president of Cabana Boy Productions. What finer credits could you ask for?

In an interview published in *The Hollywood Reporter*, Mrs. Rosenberg was quoted as saying "Ashley has taken Bill Gibson's book and has found the golden thread through it. The two of us have taken that and fused it to fashion a story that is not so technical." ■

## The Twilight Zone Movie Trial: An Opinion

The *Twilight Zone* movie trial is coming to a close. The Defense has rested and the jury is deliberating on the culpability of the five filmmakers charged with the wrongful deaths of Vic Morrow and two children, Myca Dinh Le and Renee Chen.

Because no "legal" decision has been reached, I can sit here and have an opinion on the matter untainted by the decision of twelve people good and true.

Let's start with some facts. Late on 23 July 1982, John Landis was directing actor Vic Morrow as he carried two children through a Viet Nam village set for a sequence in *Twilight Zone: The Motion Picture*. There were explosions going off all around Morrow and the children and there was a helicopter flying just twenty-five feet overhead. Somehow, things went wrong and the helicopter lost its rotor, sending the craft down on top of Morrow and the two children, killing them. Those are the facts.

I was not there that ill-fated night. But I have been on quite a number of sets during the day and late at night. I've worked on films that have used explosives that have used helicopters, that have used children. I've also known John Landis and George Folsey, Jr., the film's co-producer, for years. Both of these men are standing trial for the deaths of Vic Morrow and the two children. Also standing trial are Dan Allingham, the film's Unit Production Manager, Paul Steward, coordinator of special effects, and Dorsey Wingo, the helicopter's pilot.

I know that these are not heartless men, unconcerned for the safety of the people they worked with. Landis started his movie career as a stunt man. He knows the inherent dangers involved in filmmaking. He also knows the importance of planning. No stunt man takes a fall without knowing exactly what to expect.

When that helicopter came down, Landis and his camera crew were a scant few dozen yards away. Had the copter spun the other way, they could have just as easily been the victims. Even the most callous of people worries about his own skin. He doesn't leave himself open for death. And Landis was the first person to rush over to try and lend aid.

Some people feel that as the director, Landis is responsible for anything that happened on the set. He was, after all, in charge. It's not the job of a film's director or producer to know how to

blow up a hut or fly a helicopter. That's why experts are hired. Dorsey Wingo was no amateur. He's flown hundreds of hours. Paul Steward is not a school kid playing with explosives. He and his crew were experienced and hold state-issued demolition licenses. If something is unsafe, it is the responsibility of these experts to point it out, to make it safe, or to refuse to do it. Even if the film's director or producer wants to do it.

Based on my own experience, my discussions with people who have a hands-on knowledge of the types of effects used, and discussions with people who were there, these unfortunate deaths were an accident. Not a careless or reckless act on the part of any of the accused. An accident. And no one is truly at fault.

But the actions of the current prosecutor suggest that this terrible accident was a deliberate act of mayhem. Deputy District Attorney Lea D'Agostino is carrying on what appears to be a vendetta against the film industry in general, with Landis and Folsey the focus of her attacks.

Newspaper reports indicate she has been reprimanded several times by the Judge. On at least one occasion, the Judge has stated that she is dangerously close to having the case declared a mistrial. She has attempted to scare people into turning away from the defendants. Ralph Bellamy, who appeared in Landis's *Trading Places*, came to the courtroom as a spectator, to lend moral support to his friend John Landis. In the hallways, Bellamy was approached by the press and asked for his opinion. He gave it. Ms. D'Agostino slapped him with a subpoena. The Judge threw it out and reprimanded the prosecutor. Another member of the District Attorney's staff has testified that Ms. D'Agostino attempted to get him to commit perjury, a charge she denies.

While I believe that no one is to blame for the crash, there is one person who might have some culpability. That person is James Camomile, the special effects man who actually detonated the explosive charges that lead to the downing of the helicopter. The special effects man who admits he wasn't paying attention to the location of the helicopter when he detonated the charges. The man who has been granted immunity by the prosecutor.

It is my firm belief that none of the defendants should be found guilty of contributing to the deaths of Vic Morrow, Myca Dinh Le, and Renee Chen. I hope that justice will prevail.

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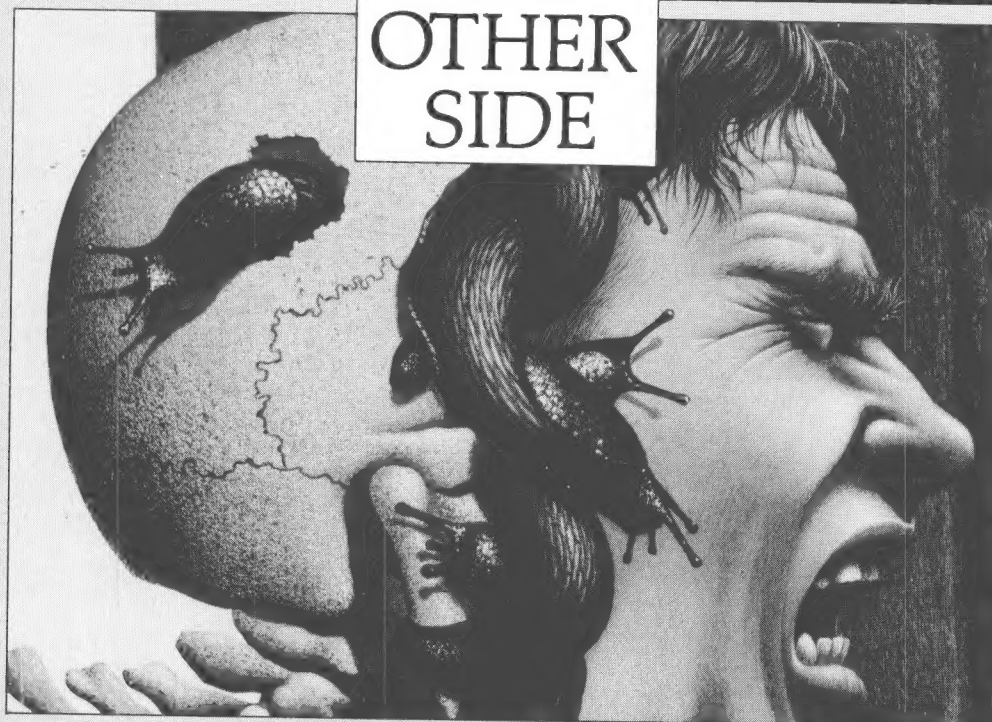
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# THE OTHER SIDE



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## IT CAME FROM ACROSS THE POND

There are many fables that float around about writers. Walter Gibson, the writer of almost all *The Shadow* stories of the 1930s and '40s, reputedly had several manual typewriters lined up in a row in his workspace. There, in order to produce all the material that went into his monthly *Shadow* magazine, he would write his stories at such a fantastic rate that each machine would begin to heat up and he had to move on to the next to continue.

There's no way to prove the truth of a story like that, but keep it in mind as you learn about the newest horror media sensation to reach American readers this year.

Shaun Hutson is probably not a name that you're too familiar with, something that is likely to change in the months to come. At the revoltingly young age of twenty-eight, Hutson threatens to better that legend with one of his own. In the past five years the British-born author has produced thirty-three novels, including the British version of *The Terminator*. They range in scope and genre from westerns to war stories, but he is best known for his horror fiction. And it is that fiction which will finally be entering our borders this fall.

Two novels, *Slugs*, and its sequel, *Breeding Ground*, will be released here by Leisure Books in August and November of 1987 respectively, though the first was published in Great Britain back in 1982. A raw, visceral exploration of the lives of a band of man-eating slugs who lay siege to a town, Hutson's novel takes us to literary territory we've never dared go before. No other guide was this experienced in what it is that makes us queasy. The work was completed around the same time that Horror's New Lord, Clive Barker, was beginning to release his *Books of Blood*—but where Barker's experimentation with sexual taboos mixed together with classic horror motifs has found a foothold here, Hutson's even more disturbing prose has taken a little longer to cross the pond.

Hutson's work is grisly stuff: "The slugs stripped the body clean of flesh, then they devoured the softer internal organs... their mouths moving constantly, tasting the warm blood. It had formed a pool around the body,

soaking into the rotted floorboards, mingling with the mucoid slime which the creatures themselves had left behind. And then, when there was nothing left worth eating, they retreated back slowly to the cellar, to the darkness."

Describing his work as "the literary equivalent of a car accident," Hutson commented recently in a British rock/literature review on his background.

"As a kid the first magazine I remember reading regularly was *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, the old American thing, and I just seemed to graduate from there. I used to make up my own stories and write them down when I was a kid, and then I read the truly awful *Night of the Crabs* by someone called Guy N. Smith... it's like a really bad grade 'B' 1950s movie, you know, *appalling*, and it's full of lines like 'man should not tamper with what he does not understand.' So I read that and thought, 'Hell, I don't believe it! I'm gonna have a go at this.' I knew I could do better than *that*."

After writing his first two novels at the age of eighteen—both of which were rejected by all who saw them—Hutson struggled for the next three years to sell something. Finally, scant days away from his twenty-first birthday, an editor bought a war story for a mere one hundred-fifty pounds, and no royalties. Since then he has spent ten months out of each year just writing, producing an average of six or seven published books for the last five years.

While he's not ashamed of his other works in his war and Wild West modes, he would not name them and has not said whether or not they will ever be released here.

If the same cult fame follows his writing here as has manifested itself overseas, Hutson may have little choice. His work may take on a slithering, gnawing life of its own:

"Below, the slugs slithered about. There were many who had not yet eaten and they were restless, as if sensing that this was just the beginning..."

—Robert Simpson



# THE OTHER SIDE

## FLIES ON THE SCREEN

The annual Insect Fear Film Festival at the University of Illinois is entomologist Dr. May Berenbaum's chance to swat some of Hollywood's dumbest ideas about bugs.

"What we like to do is explain where Hollywood has gone wrong," Dr. Berenbaum said, "for example, why a moth the size of a B-52 couldn't get

by Nicholas Meyer, it concerns an entomologist who turns a swarm of women into man-killing bee-creatures. "It represents 'the ultimate nightmare for macho types,'" Berenbaum said.

Insectiphobia creeps into the movies most commonly in three ways, she



off the ground."

Each year's festival is a combination of movies the likes of *Mothra* (1962, about a giant moth) and *Them!* (1954, giant ants), along with Berenbaum's entomological lectures and displays of real-life insects.

"I think this is a great way to get a lot of people to listen to an insect lecture despite themselves," she said.

This year's festival included *Invasion of the Bee Girls* (1973) to illustrate the theme of female superiority. Written

said:

Movies about giant-sized insects that wreak terror and destruction (*Mothra*), movies about vengeful insects, ticked off at mankind's thoughtless poisoning of the environment (*Them!*), and movies about scientists who bug nature by questing into those things that man was not meant to know. (*The Fly*.)

Bee stings can be fatal to people who suffer allergic reactions, and that's the one time when insect fear makes sense.

Berenbaum is planning

next year's festival for sometime in February or March.

One possible theme is movies about creepy-crawlie things that are misidentified as being insects: crustaceans, arthropods, and aracnids—otherwise known as crabs, scorpions, and spiders.

—Ron Wolfe

## LAND OF THE RISING MOON

First it was transistor radios. Then automobiles and electronic components. Then pianos and raw fish, designer clothes and management manuals. Lately it seems the only escape from things Japanese is beyond the grave.

Guess again.

You may or may not have heard about the latest invasion into American markets. Japanese animated cartoons (or "Japanimation" as they are called by their fans) combine high-quality, tremendously detailed animation with nonstop action and high drama to produce some of the hottest entertainments to hit the silver screen in decades. Most of it so far, like *Robotech*, *Captain Harlock* and *Go-Bots* is high-tech space opera.

But now they're doing horror as well.

One prime example is *Vampire Hunter D*, a two-hour feature film that's developed an ardent cult following here in the U.S. Set in a devastated future about twelve thousand years hence, it depicts an Earth divided between a human peasant class armed with laser

rifles, roving bands of mutant monsters, and a race of vampire noblemen.

As the film opens, a beautiful human woman out hunting monsters finds herself face to face with the evil Count Lee who puts the bite on her after she loses her crucifix. To rid herself of the curse upon her, she turns to a mysterious



loner known only as "D," who just may be one of the undead himself. *Vampire Hunter D* has the sort of murky, turbulent atmospherics one associates with the best Hammer films, combined with a lush, brooding romanticism reminiscent of Robert E. Howard's *Solomon Kane*.

Thus far, *Vampire Hunter D* has not been imported into America, perhaps because its subject matter is considered too strong for "children's entertainment". Right now, the only way you can see it is to attend one of the many science fiction conventions that feature programs of animation, or find a copy of the Japanese video tape (not in English, unfortunately).

—George Wilhelmson



# THE OTHER SIDE



## FACES OF FEAR

The man who made it as easy to change your face as it is to change your mind was an authentic Hollywood genius named Don Post. A legendary movie-prop maker whose work included fabricating those sinister seed pods for the 1956 version of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, Post was also the man who gave a whole new face to masquerading by introducing pull-over rubber facemasks.

"He gained a reputation for being the Hollywood maskmaker, because he always made the highest quality," says the maskmaker's son, Don Post Jr., who carries on the family tradition. "He made Frankenstein's monster and the Creature from the Black Lagoon and the Phantom of the Opera."

For a time, Post used masks to help teach a class for actors. His original idea was that wearing a mask would be useful in teaching the student actors to assume different personalities, though what happened was stranger than he expected.

"We found that some

masks have distinct personalities, beyond that which was intended by the sculptor," Post Jr. recalls. "One was the face of an old woman. No matter who wore the mask," he says, "the old woman liked violets."

The best selling mask from the Don Post Studio is a baldheaded menace named Tor, resembling Tor Johnson in *Plan Nine from Outer Space*.

The costliest are a five-hundred-dollar face-hugger from the movie *Alien* (complete with a reptilian tail that coils around the wearer's throat), and a three-hundred-fifty-dollar "disturbingly realistic" mask of Nosferatu the Vampire King.

Most of the Post Studios masks sell for sixty or seventy dollars in costume and magic shops.

At that price, people aren't likely to buy Post's werewolves just to wear wolves on Halloween. Post's son says that his father's masks are now being worn all year round.

"My feeling is that it's a healing thing to take vacation from your inhibitions, and to become a different character for a brief time."

—Ron Wolfe

## BAD-DREAM GIRL

Heather Langenkamp *doesn't* have bad dreams about Freddy Krueger. Langenkamp played the role of brave Nancy Thompson in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and, although she didn't appear in the second film, she returns in the third film of the series, *Dream Warriors*.

Freddy was the creep who stalked through Nancy's troubled dreams, giving her plenty of reasons for nightmares, including a severe case of problem nails.

But, even though her character had nightmares, Langenkamp said *she* never dreamed bad things about Freddy.

at the difference."

Langenkamp was a college student majoring in Russian studies when she played Nancy the first time. She recalls feeling skeptical about the merits of playing a horror movie heroine—"the young screamer." Working with Freddy woke her up to a different attitude.

"In this genre you have so much freedom," she says. "I see horror movies as being a great field for imagination."

The first *Nightmare* was a low-budget sleeper that brought in a phenomenal twenty-three million dollars in box-office receipts. Its higher-priced sequels have had modest box-office success. Will there be another *Nightmare*?

"I bet there will be," Langenkamp predicts, though she doesn't expect to appear in it, since



"I'm fond of him," she says.

Freddy doesn't give her bad dreams because she knows a nice guy named Robert Englund is behind the considerable makeup of Freddy's burn-scarred face.

"Freddy is just as real to me as Robert is," Langenkamp says. "Robert, though, is a really warm and sensitive person."

"Every time I see Robert without his makeup, I'm so surprised

Nancy did worse than fall out of bed at the end of Part Three.

But not even *that* gave her nightmares.

Instead, she says, "I have a lot of nightmares about bad things that happen on the movie set."

Flubbed lines?

Bad direction?

Electrical failures?

No, more like this:

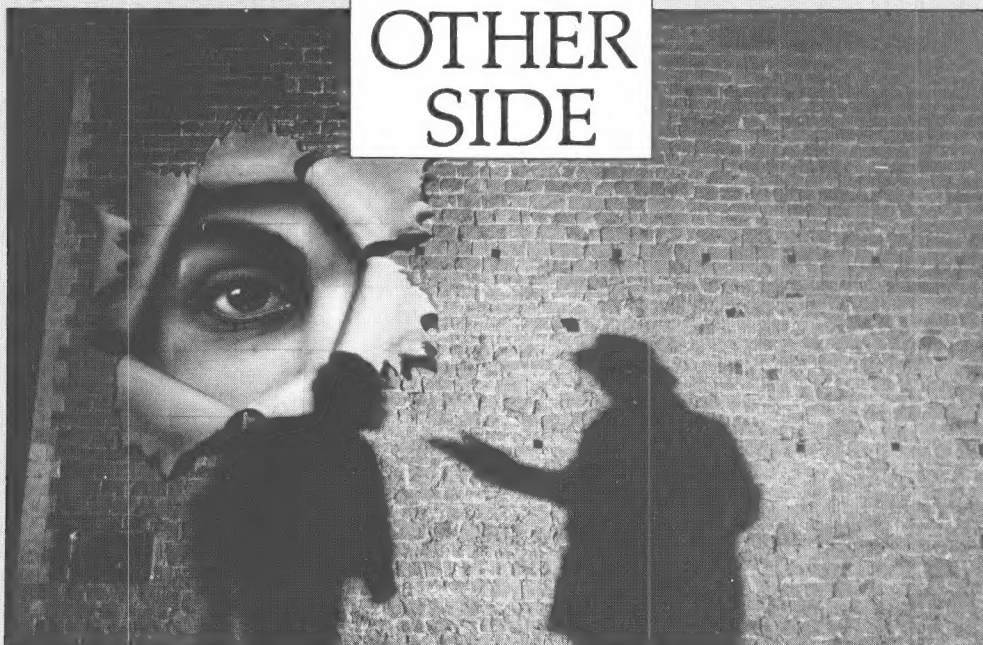
"—I show up for work, and I'm on the set, and the camera comes to life, and it swallows me."

—Ron Wolfe

PHOTO © 1984 NEW LINE CINEMA CORP.



# THE OTHER SIDE



## HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE XENOPHOBE UNDERSTANDING DAY

Looking for something different to celebrate?

Well, the year is full of perfectly good, officially recognized holidays and observances that go practically unnoticed, probably since most of these sound too weird to be for real.

But dozens are duly recorded in 1987's thirtieth annual edition of *Chase's Annual Events*, the definitive reference book of special occasions. Here are just a few.

June 2—The Marquis De Sade's Birthday. The word "sadist" was coined from the name of this high-spirited whippersnapper. The Marquis spent most of his life in prison for just that sort of behavior, but here is a day to let bygones be bygones. Make a wish; whip out the candles.

June 11—The Spike Rail Cheese Festival. Sure, lots of towns have festivals that commemorate the glory days of railroading. Lots of towns have festivals in praise of cheesemaking. But only the townfolk of Brewster, Ohio, would think to celebrate railroads

and cheese at the same time, with a combined parade of high iron and dairy goodness.

June 27—National Fink Day. If your last name is Fink, you'd be welcome to join the crowd of other Finks who get together to celebrate this event each year in Fink, Texas, where the Fink of the Year is announced.

July 22—The First Robot Homicide Anniversary. Isaac Asimov's first law of robotics is that "a robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm." Nonetheless, a robot crushed a factory worker on this day in 1984, becoming the first to break the law.

July 27—Rat Catchers' Day. Grab one by the tail, and observe the six hundred eleventh anniversary of the Pied Piper of Hamelin's ratty accomplishment.

August 22—Lizzie Borden Liberation Day. A day set aside by the official Friends of Lizzy Borden to clear Lizzy's name of an "unproven charge" that she gave her mother forty whacks and then ... or was that forty-one ...?

August 11—Presidential Joke Day. A day for

remembering funny things about our presidents. It was on August 11, 1984, that President Reagan amused everyone during a voice-level test for radio. Later he complained that he didn't mean for the remark to be recorded. His words: "My fellow Americans, I am pleased to tell you I just signed the legislation which outlaws Russia forever. The bombing begins in five minutes."

September 29—Xenophobia Understanding Day. What the heck is the matter with those people who feel terrified at the idea of being surrounded by strangers?

—Ron Wolfe

## ZONED AGAIN?

Are you *zoning* it? Feeling a little *zoned*? If so, you've got the *Atlantic Monthly* baffled. The February '87 issue of that magazine reports on new words being tracked by editors at Houghton Mifflin for possible inclusion in the *American Heritage Dictionary*. None of these people can guess the source of a new usage of the word "zone" by professional athletes and *New York Times* sportswriters, among others.

The *Atlantic* describes

zone as "noun: ... a level of mental concentration so intense that the brain functions at its peak, the player's sense of time is distorted and elongated, and euphoria and a feeling of effortless and certain victory pervades; a state of altered consciousness that enables such athletes to achieve peak, winning performances—verb, to experience such a zone." They quote the *Times*: "Studies by sports psychologists are taking the mystery out of why ... the world's great players always seem to win the big points. The answer ... lies in the zone, as the players call it. 'Becker's in the zone,' they say, or 'Becker's zoning it.'"

Unable to find any reason for this usage, the *Atlantic* goes on to say that "It appears that professional tennis players have given us a new sense of both the noun and the verb *zone*."

Oh yeah? We thought everyone had heard of a certain place—a dimension not only of sight and sound, but of mind, where such things happen all the time.

—Jay Sheckley